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# THE ASTROLOGER :

## A LEGEND OF THE BLACK FOREST.

BY A LADY.

What is't ? a spirit ?  
Lord, how it looks about ! Believe me, Sir,  
It carries a brave form :—But 'tis a spirit.

I might call him  
A thing divine ; for nothing natural  
I ever saw so noble.

And by my prescience  
I find my zenith doth depend upon  
A most auspicious star ; whose influence  
If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes  
Will ever after droop.

TEMPEST.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1846.



1459.





## INTRODUCTION.

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THE following story was translated from a manuscript found in the collection of an antiquary lately deceased. I purchased an old cabinet at the sale of his effects, and on inspecting my bargain, found a bundle of paper in a secret drawer. Somewhat surprised that such a voluminous packet should have escaped the notice of the old man's heir, and thinking it might contain some matters of family interest, I wrote a note to Mr. G——, which was answered by that gentleman in person. At the first glance I was fully convinced that my visitor was

not a man of virtu. He had neither an intellectual face nor figure; the former being round, fat, and contented; the latter short, broad, and unshapely. He made his bow, hoped I was well, said the morning was frosty, and then bustled to the chair I had placed for him at the fire.

“My note,” said I, “explained my reason for addressing you, Mr. G——.”

“It did, sir, it did; and I thank you kindly for your attention. But there was no manner of occasion for your taking so much trouble—no manner at all—thank you, sir. My poor cousin set a great store by them sort of things; but I cannot say I do.”

“I can fully believe you, sir,” I replied.

“Indeed you may,” rejoined he, simply, and laughing as he spoke. “Mrs. G——, my son Bob, and I, searched all the old

chests, and what not, before the sale. We saw that roll you wrote about; yes, yes, we saw it. Bob, who has always his wits about him, opened it, but he could make nothing of it. He then sent for a friend of his, a famous Latin scholar—a famous one, indeed; but, bless you, it was all Greek to him! He gave it up as a bad business. While we were puzzling over it, our neighbour, Isaac Abrahams, dropped in—a German Jew, sir. ‘There,’ said I, ‘Mr. Abrahams, is a thing none of us can make out.’ ‘Very possibly, G——,’ said he; ‘maybe I can. Let me see—oh, German!’ ‘German!’ cried my wife; ‘then I’ll be bound it is complete trash.’ ‘That does not follow, Mrs. G——,’ said Mr. Abrahams, sharply, turning round as he spoke, and going out. ‘But it does follow,’ said my wife; ‘and I would not have you, Tony, puzzle yourself with any-

thing of the sort. Wasn't it such nonsense that turned poor Cousin Nat's brain? Take my advice—leave it where you found it. What have we to do with German, prithee? Let us stick to good old English.' So, sir," pursued Mr. G——, with a self-satisfied chuckle, "we threw the roll back again into the drawer. There it is, and you are heartily welcome to it. God knows, you paid enough for that old racketty press, and well deserve to keep all it contains in the nature of papers. I would not give five shillings for the whole bargain."

So saying, he rose from his chair, and again thanking me for my attention to him, with one of his best bows, took his leave.

When he was gone, I untied the roll, and being a tolerable German scholar, soon became amused with the subject of the manuscript. The story was prefaced by a

letter, probably written by some friend of *Cousin Nat's*, the antiquary, to whom it seems he was indebted for the manuscript. But the letter, which I subjoin, will speak for itself.

If the story should appear before the public, I shall trust to its well-known indulgence, merely expressing a hope that those who honour it with a perusal will pass a milder sentence on it than Mrs. G——.

THE TRANSLATOR.

FROM A—— TO N——.

“ London, 20 Oct. 18—.

“ I perfectly agree with you, my dear N——. It was surely never intended by the Supreme Disposer of the universe that his creatures should dive into the mysteries of futurity, or presumptuously raise that veil which has been so mercifully spread over the destiny of man. Yet such was not always the opinion, or at least the practice, of mankind, as the history of our own and of other nations sufficiently demonstrates. There have been men, and enlightened men too, of every country, both Christian and pagan, who have implicitly and blindly trusted to the predictions of astrologers, and who have made the occult science at once the study and guide of their lives and actions. But it were needless to recapitu-

late to one of your deep research their names, or to enlarge on a subject we have so frequently discussed and so fully agreed upon. But still, before I finally dismiss it, I will, with your leave, say a few words by way of apology, for the liberty am about to take with you. I have long waited for an opportunity to intrude the subject on your notice: our late discussion seems to have occurred most opportunely for my purpose. Had it been started by me, you might have with no little justice accused me of design; but as it emanated entirely from yourself, I shall gladly avail myself of it, and without further preamble plunge at once into the very heart of my subject.

“ In my late visit to Germany, it was my lot to encounter, even in these degenerate days, a disciple of that obsolete school—a man endowed with no mean share of good sense on all subjects but the one in question. He was—but you shall have the whole recital in regular order.



“ Did I ever tell you that I was related, on my mother’s side, to a noble German family? and that the respected individual above alluded to was her only brother, Maurice Ernest, Baron Von Ebur? He resided, at the time I speak of, in a chateau pleasantly situated in a noble park on the borders of the Black Forest, in Swabia, within a short league of the ruined castle of Romana, once the residence of his maternal ancestors.

“ After I had been with him a few weeks, and he became more familiar with me, (for he was naturally of a shy disposition,) I discovered by a mere accident that he was much addicted to judicial astrology, and passed a great portion of his time in studying trines and angles, calculating nativities, &c. &c. &c. With some little address I introduced the conversation, and was much amused at the tenour of his discourse. To draw him still further out, I did not conceal my contempt for the science,

and treated it so lightly that he was imperatively called upon to defend his opinions, which he did with great address, and an ability and depth of reasoning that would have done no little honour to a better cause. After a time, and when I appeared, as I really was, unconvinced, he said, 'You remind me of a maternal ancestor of ours, Baron Ernest of Romana: he, it should seem, possessed all your scepticism, but, nevertheless, was a clever man. The mention of this ancestor reminds me of a manuscript story I possess, which I think must have been written by the baron, for his signature was attached to all the original papers. I must confess, however, that the tenour of the story bears hard on my favourite study, but you shall hear. My grandfather,' pursued my uncle, 'married the heiress of Romana, and, together with his young bride, bore hither a chest of musty records, which during his life was never opened. When he died, and my

father was about to take possession of his mother's patrimony, a distant branch of the Romana stock ventured to contest his right, and a long and tedious lawsuit ensued. During the contest, the old chest was necessarily resorted to, and, by my own request, I was the person who examined and arranged the parchments. Though only eighteen at the time, I was particularly fascinated with my occupation, having neither health nor inclination for active employments. Beside deeds, settlements, and grants, the chest contained voluminous memoranda, all written in the same quaint and often unintelligible style, which I had little leisure during the progress of the suit to peruse, but when it was happily decided in our favour, and when I had recovered some family misfortunes which, about its termination, threw a gloom over my spirits, I bethought myself once more of the contents of the chest, and with extreme diligence set myself to decipher and arrange

the various matter it contained. The labour was infinite, but the satisfaction and amusement I derived from it more than repaid me. Some parts, however, of the history, for such, when compiled, it really proved, were highly displeasing to me, as I could by no means agree with the writer in decrying as much as possible and on every occasion the science of astrology; nevertheless, I would not alter the original text, further than to make it intelligible to the modern reader. I will show you the manuscript, but I cannot vouch for the truth of all the incidents recorded in it. The main points, no doubt, are authentic, though I will not say so much for the names, for they were supplied as my own fancy dictated, being in the original documents only in initial; but it matters little to you or me whether the hero's name was really Albert, as I have made it, or Alfred, Alexander, or Antony, or whether the king was of Hungary or any other country, for

there was no letter to give me the faintest clue to the name of the kingdom he ruled over. In short, my dear A——, we may derive as much amusement, and even as much instruction from a fiction as a truth, and whether the tale in question be the one or the other, I cannot deny it has its moral, though I wish our kinsman had not been so inveterate against astrology, which, after all, he knew only by name. Had he taken the trouble to study the science, he must have altered his opinion.

“ ‘ But, I weary you, my dear A——,’ said the worthy being, rising from his chair and approaching an antique cabinet, which he unlocked with a silver key that he always wore suspended by a chain of the same metal round his neck. ‘ Take this,’ pursued he, drawing forth a bundle of papers of ominous magnitude; ‘ peruse them at your leisure, and if the story they contain meet your taste, you are heartily welcome to keep them. And now, good

A——,' said my uncle, pressing my hand affectionately, 'I shall expect your free opinion of the story, as you know'—and he smiled faintly—'I have been as a foster-father to it.'

"I promised to comply with his request, not however without casting a hopeless glance at the bulk of the bundle I held in my hand; but without offending the amiable Von Ebur, I could by no means refuse a ready concurrence with his request. After pressing his hand affectionately, and wishing him repose, we parted—alas! dear N——, never in this life to meet again. When his servant entered his chamber next morning at the usual hour, he found his beloved master dead! Yes, my friend, the soul of the gentle, virtuous Von Ebur, had fled its frail and suffering earthly tenement, to seek those regions of felicity where, I trust, nay doubt not, an immortal crown awaited it.

"The suddenness of the blow greatly afflicted me, and it was some time ere I

recovered my usual serenity. Germany had no longer any charms for me, and when I had seen the mortal remains of my uncle consigned to the tomb of his ancestors, and taken possession of my new estates, (for I found myself his sole heir,) I returned to England.

“ I had now time to think of my uncle’s present, and I must confess I derived more pleasure from its perusal than I expected. As you are an antiquary, and fond of musty papers and old stories, I transmit the whole to you: make what use you please of it. When you have read it, give me your opinion. In the meantime, believe me, as ever,

“ Yours, sincerely,

“ A——.”

THE ASTROLOGER:  
A LEGEND OF THE BLACK FOREST.

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PART THE FIRST.

“And mocking loud his labour vain,  
The mountain-spirits laugh'd;  
Far up the echoing dell was borne  
Their wild unearthly shout of scorn.”

“That form of maiden loveliness,  
‘Twixt childhood and ‘twixt youth.”

“Motionless awhile he stands,  
Folds his arms, and clasps his hands.”

THE Margravine of B—— had just retired from the bath, and was indolently lolling on a luxuriously soft couch, when a pretty, gaily-dressed page entered the apartment, and gracefully bending one knee to the floor, gave Prince Albert's duty to her

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highness, and if it were agreeable and convenient, he would willingly have a few minutes' conversation with her highness.

"Tell the prince, Gondibert," replied the margravine, "that a visit from his highness is always agreeable, and assure him I am quite at leisure to receive him."

The page rose from his submissive posture, and bowed his curly head till it almost touched the rich Persian carpet on which he stood; then retreating as gracefully as he had entered, was out of sight in a moment; the next, he re-appeared, ushering in Prince Albert.

The prince was a fine-looking young man, of twenty-one or two, possessed of a most interesting countenance, and a figure remarkable for its grace and symmetry, which was not a little set off by the admirable fashion of a dress composed of buff and blue silk, tastefully embroidered with silver stars. A rich cloak of crimson velvet, lined with minever, fell off his left shoulder, and displayed the order of Saint Stephen; while a costly baldrick of blue velvet, thickly set

with jewels, supported a sword of curious workmanship, and his cap, which he bore gallantly in his right hand, was also adorned with precious stones, and feathers white as the breast of the swan and pliant as the osier.

It is little to be wondered at that the eyes of a mother should rest with fond admiration on such a son, or that her heart should throb with the proudest delight as, half rising from her recumbent posture, she prepared to bid him welcome. The pleasure which she felt, however, was somewhat checked when she observed that his cheeks looked flushed, and that his eyes sparkled with unwonted and indignant fire.

“Albert!” exclaimed the fond mother, alarmed at his unusual appearance, “in Heaven’s name, what disturbs you?—why wear you such an air of chagrin?”

The prince, deaf to this appeal, continued to advance, and as he did so, waved his cap backward and forward with a motion which evidently betrayed the disturbance of his mind. Arrived at the couch, he suddenly

paused, and his mother once more repeated her demand, but not in such a mild tone as before, subjoining that if he meant to play the mute, he had better retire, as she felt disposed to sleep.

“Madam,” said the prince, slightly colouring, “pardon this unseasonable intrusion. I feared my visit would be ill-timed; but I will not detain you long. I come a suppliant in Charles’s behalf and my own: we would entreat your good offices with the margrave, who now positively forbids our going to Hermanstadt, or, at least, I should rather say, *my* going, for I am the only one on whom he has laid his interdiction.”

“Not let you go to Hermanstadt!” exclaimed the margravine, sharply, the fire flashing from her eyes. “Surely you jest, boy! your father never forbade you.”

The prince coloured highly, bowed, but spoke not. He saw too late the folly of his conduct, and deeply regretted having aroused a temper the violence of which he had often trembled to witness. Changing his manner,

therefore, he said mildly, and affecting to make a jest of the whole affair—

“The margrave thinks Hermanstadt too near the Black Forest, and would rather that I tempted not its demons at this particular season. As usual, Florenzo has been consulted, and his voice is against my going thither. There is something amiss among my old enemies, the stars—but pray, dearest madam, look not so displeased. I hate myself for my folly, in coming hither, like a spoiled child. The affair is a trifle; treat it as such, or you will make me miserable. I blush for the needless trouble I have given you. My sire means it all for the best. His love——”

“Peace, boy!” cried the indignant Sophia—“peace! Never tell me of such love. Call you that love which consigns a man in the flower of his age to inactivity, and all the petty vexations arising from a state of actual captivity? The son of the meanest serf in the margraviate is freer than the son of his prince. This cannot be endured; it is a growing evil, and must be checked. I

will go instantly to your father, and demand his reasons for denying your innocent request. You *shall* go to Hermanstadt. What! would he break up the hunting party? Would he disappoint your cousin, who dotes on the chase, and whom we so seldom see? Would he make known his reasons for refusing you, and expose you as well as himself to the derision of the whole court? No, no, it must not, shall not be!"

Having uttered this with passionate volubility, the margravine was rushing from the chamber, glowing with rage, when, with gentle force, her son withheld her.

"Oh! pause, dearest madam; let me beseech you to listen to me. Spare me the pain of knowing that my indiscretion, my childish complaints, have precipitated you into a misunderstanding with my beloved, most indulgent father. Ah! my mother! you know his heart; you know that extreme affection for me influence all his actions. I feel assured that he would not have refused my going to Hermanstadt on slight grounds; and though

we think differently from him on that subject, we should pity and spare the only weakness of his character. I no longer wish to oppose his commands. I beg to withdraw my request; and I would also entreat you to abandon your purpose. Could any indulgence, any scheme of pleasure, think you, afford me gratification, if it was obtained at the expense of my parent's happiness? Could I live, and be the wretch to cause discord between them? No—believe me, no!”

The margravine frowned.

“This evil has been gradually advancing towards maturity,” replied she, “else at your earnest solicitation I would certainly abandon my purpose; but if something be not done to release you from the trammels of a superstitious father, you will be rendered contemptible, as well as miserable.”

“Pardon me, dearest madam,” exclaimed the prince; “a dutiful obedience to my father's wishes can never render me contemptible, however it may render me unhappy. But let us drop the subject.

Rather than distress the margrave, I will abandon my wish. Charles can go without me."

"That he shall not, if I can help it," said the margravine, in a softened tone. "I feel the propriety of what you have urged; I will go to your father, and entreat him to revoke his harsh decree, for so I cannot help calling it; but I voluntarily promise, if I do not succeed, to use no reproaches; for your sake, I will repress my indignation. Accept my hand as the pledge of my discretion. Wait here my return: but I would not have you too sanguine. Remember, it is possible I may not convince your father of the folly of ruling your actions by the fiat of those star-struck fools. I have failed, alas! too often, to trust too much to my powers at present; but I will do what I can. Adieu!"

So saying, the margravine departed, and without summoning her attendants, sought her consort's cabinet, where at that hour she was sure of finding him. Herman was engaged at chess (his favourite game) with

Count Saarsden, his master of the horse, to whom he was much attached, and who had been much about his person since the Baron Romana had retired from court. On the margravine's entrance, the count would have retired, but, with a gracious smile, she begged him to remain (no one could be more gracious than Sophia, when she pleased); and, turning to the margrave, who, from some recent success in the game, was in high good humour, said, "My visit, I fear, will interrupt you."

"By no means," replied his highness. "You are welcome, Sophia, at all times; but having said so, let me express my surprise at seeing you here at this hour, which I thought you generally devoted to seclusion and repose."

The margravine smiled.

"True," said she, carelessly, "that, I confess, is my wonted practice; but I come now a suitor from Albert; you cannot think how chagrined he is at your decision respecting his jaunt to Hermanstadt. Poor fellow! You should consider the moping



life he leads. Since his return from Romania, he has seldom passed these walls. Take a retrospect of your own feelings when at his age, and allow him a little more liberty. You know, my dear Herman, that his cousin wishes for his company. They will not pass the limits of Hermanstadt chase. I think I may promise, in Albert's name, that he will not enter Schwartzwald."

The margrave turned pale.

"Sophia!" exclaimed he, "you know not what you ask. Would you precipitate your child—your only child—into the jaws of ruin?"

"Nay, nay, my good lord," replied the margravine, "I would not be so unnatural; but surely you jest. What danger, what ruin can overtake him within the limits of Hermanstadt? or even in Schwartzwald? Has he not resided in the midst of that wild region for four years in perfect safety?"

The margrave mused; care and anxiety were seated on his brow. At length he replied: "You are right, Sophia; he has

resided there in safety even for four years; but he can do so no longer. If you were not cursed with the spirit of scepticism, you would give credit to the assertions of men who, by study and patient investigation, have acquired an insight into the hidden mysteries of nature. Need I again repeat, that this is a critical period of Albert's life, and I would by no means expose him to the perils that menace him while a malign and superior planet is lord of the ascendant. Give up, therefore, the idea of his going to Hermanstadt. Cannot the perverse boy amuse himself here? I shall order Prince Charles hence, if he meddles with what does not concern him. Albert was very happy till he arrived."

"Censure not Prince Charles," said the margravine: "he may pity his cousin, as every one else does; but I am sure, he by no means renders him dissatisfied. Albert, poor boy! wants no one to point out to him the misery of his situation. Alas! *that* is ever present to his view, and nothing but a strong sense of duty enables him to

support the rigour of his destiny; you may, however, pull his chains too tight, and be the means yourself of expediting his ruin. If you would attend to my advice, you would by all means suffer him to go on this hunting party. If you fear to lose sight of him, accompany him yourself; and to take off the appearance of going merely to watch him, I will go also: we will give the thing the air of a pleasurable party—the old castle of Hermanstadt is spacious enough to contain us all. What says my dear Herman? Surely he will not refuse my prayer. We shall go,” continued she, in her softest tone—“I knew it; a thousand and a thousand thanks!”

“Sorceress!” cried the margrave, turning pale, “urge me not; I cannot go to Hermanstadt!”

“Why not?” inquired the margravine.

“*You know*,” was the reply.

“Nonsense!” responded her highness. “I know nothing that should prevent you putting my plan into execution.” Then, in a lower tone, she said—“Recollect yourself;

you must go now, or your reason for refusing will ——”

“Say no more,” interrupted the margrave; “let it be even as you propose.” Then burying his face in his hands, he sighed deeply, and seemed little disposed to continue the conversation.

Count Saarsden, meantime, was most awkwardly situated: he dared not retire without permission, and he feared to ask it, lest he might offend the margravine, so jealous was she of her authority, and so seldom would she permit those about her even to seem to dictate to her better judgment. At length, much to his relief, the margravine prepared to retire.

“Count,” said she, “I am going to the terrace; will you accompany me?”

Saarsden bowed.

“If the margrave has no further orders for me, I shall be most happy.”

Herman started: a deep sigh burst from his oppressed heart.

“You may go, count,” said he; “I am no longer fit for society.”

“ But you will see Albert ?” interposed Sophia; “ he must thank you for your indulgence.”

The margrave shook his head, but she affected not to observe the motion; and taking the offered hand of Count Saarsden, was led from the chamber.

Before visiting the terrace, the margravine returned to the chamber where she had left the prince, and gave him the joyful intelligence that he might accompany the hunters to Hermanstadt.

“ You must now go,” pursued she, “ and thank your sire; he will think it negligent, if you delay; but you need not make a long visit—I shall expect you on the terrace.”

Albert, having kissed the margravine’s hand, and offered his thanks for her interference, flew, all gratitude and joy, to his father’s feet, who, whatever might be his subject of discontent, could never look coldly on a son in whom his own life was wrapped up, and who, however contradictory the assertion may sound, formed

at once the pain and pleasure of his existence.

While Albert was thus engaged, Sophia proceeded on her walk. In her way to the terrace, she met Prince Charles, who instantly joined her, and by his lively and witty sallies diverted her mind from dwelling on some painful retrospects which her late interview with her husband had conjured up.

This prince was some years older than Albert, and, till the birth of his cousin, had been looked upon as the heir of B——. How he bore his changed prospects, and his real sentiments towards his young kinsman, the progress of this tale will unfold. If his mind was unamiable, his exterior was highly prepossessing: he was even more eminently handsome than Prince Albert; his form was far more robust, and the character of his beauty more commanding. From his mother, a Bohemian princess, he inherited large black eyes, the finest black hair, and that rich olive complexion which rarely distinguishes a German.

Prince Charles, in consequence of his military avocations, (for he possessed a high command in his uncle's army,) was seldom able to make a long stay at B——. At this period, however, the tranquil state of Swabia and her neighbours left him at leisure to pursue his own inclinations. Fond of change, he made travelling rather the business than the amusement of his life. From Italy, where he had been some time, he suddenly returned to B—— ; and from several hints casually dropped, it should seem he meant to remain there some time.

As yet he had seen little of Prince Albert, and that circumstance he affected deeply to deplore.

"I would have my cousin love me as a brother," said he, one day, to the margravine. "The progress of his education, and my own various pursuits of business and pleasure, have kept us strangers, or at least almost such. We will henceforth have but one heart; the difference of our ages will rather promote than defeat my purpose: my worldly knowledge

may assist his inexperience, while my fatigued and sated mind will find repose in an intercourse with one so unhackneyed—so inartificial. I shall be able to repress some of that superabundant and romantic generosity which he possesses, which, however amiable it may render him, lays him open to imposition and the machinations of designing people. As he is at present, he resembles more an imaginary than a real character—he is a compound of generosity, credulity, romance, and enthusiasm—all which, in a private individual, may do very well, but in one born to sovereign power is ridiculous.”

“And yet,” said the margravine, “I would not have him other than he is—time will correct what you censure. An amiable man can never make a bad prince.”

“Granted,” replied Charles; “but I see, madam, you do not understand me. I would by no means deprive my cousin of those traits of character which render him so interesting—(hateful to me, he should have said); I would only make them sub-



servient to his reason. He is at present too much under the control of feeling: he is hurried away by the first impulse, and does that in the moment of excitation which after-thought makes subject of regret."

"As yet," replied the margravine, "the poor boy is more sinned against than prone to give offence, and I wish from my heart he had not half the sensibility he has; for, with his father's fatal infatuation, it will be dreadfully taxed. I wish to Heaven, instead of schooling Albert, you would take your uncle in hand: he will really make his son miserable, if he pursue his present course with him."

"I fear my uncle is past cure," replied the prince, smiling; "but we must devise something to break the monotony of Albert's life, while he is penned between these four walls. What of either noble or great can we expect from him? Can the eaglet fly, if his wing be clipped? Surely, the margrave does not mean to keep him here for ever. Would he not trust him under my care, think you, madam? Albert was speaking

yesterday of his wish to partake in the pleasures of the chase, which he has not done since he left Romana. We could go to Hermanstadt. You have great influence with the margrave: suppose you sound him on the subject."

"We will arrange the party, and then speak of it as settled to your uncle; if we take him by surprise, perhaps rather than expose his son to the sneers of his companions, he will let him go."

The prince smiled, doubtingly, but agreed that the experiment should be made, secretly exulting in having gained such a warm auxiliary as his aunt. This conversation took place previous to the opening scene of this tale; but the arrangements the margravine spoke of were not made so secretly as to escape the anxious Herman. Not wishing to refuse the prince, without sufficient grounds, he privately consulted Florenzo, and, as has been already seen, the astrologer's voice, as was too frequently the case, opposed the wishes of the prince. How every obstacle was finally triumphed over,

it were needless to repeat; I shall merely say, ere I proceed to other matters, that the margrave exacted a solemn promise from the prince, that he would on no account whatever (were it even a case of life and death) exceed the limits of Hermanstadt chase.

There was nothing now to be done but to prepare for removing to Hermanstadt. As it would be impossible for so large a party to get accommodated at the Priory of St. Hubert's, it was determined that the two young princes, their companions and attendants, should go first, and be ready at Hermanstadt to receive the margrave and margravine, whose arrival was immediately to precede the chase. Nothing was wanting to add brilliancy to the scene, and never surely was a gayer pageant witnessed than the hunting train of Prince Albert. The morning of their departure, for the advanced season, was delightful; and as the prince bent to receive the blessing of his fond parents, he said gaily, "We shall meet soon."

“God grant we may *meet* in health,” sighed the margrave, “and that we may have no cause to regret we ever undertook this expedition.”

The prince, however, heard not this speech; he was already on the back of his favourite steed, and impatient to be gone.

Man appoints and God disappoints. For hardly had the princes quitted B——, when a messenger arrived from V——, to apprise the margravine of the dangerous illness of her illustrious father, the Duke of A——. This unlooked-for and unwelcome intelligence threw a damp on the spirits of the margrave and his consort—the latter in particular suffered acutely; for there had ever subsisted between the father and daughter the warmest affection, and that sort of friendly intercourse and mutual interchange of thought which rather marks the friendship of men than that of the opposite sexes, particularly in the relative situation of father and daughter. Trembling for the life of her sire, and most anxious to administer in person to his

wants, the margravine announced her determination to set off for V——. The margrave had hardly time to weigh the matter in his mind, when his consort appeared to bid him adieu: knowing how extremely attached she was to her father, he would not oppose her determination, but rather did all in his power to forward her departure. In the bustle of preparing for this little expected journey, the margravine entirely forgot that she had been prepared to take one in another direction; and at the time it is possible she might have arrived at Hermanstadt, she was well advanced on her road to V——, escorted by a strong body of armed men, a precaution highly necessary to prevent the surprises of banditti.

Leaving the margravine to pursue her journey, I shall follow the hunters to Hermanstadt, to which place the margrave was delayed proceeding at the time appointed, by his consort's hasty journey to V——.

Prince Albert, who expected the arrival of the margrave and margravine every moment, began to grow both uneasy and im-

patient at their protracted absence. He delayed the departure of the eager hunters as long as possible. Prince Charles chafed, but said nothing. At length, about the tenth hour, a courier, breathless with the haste he had used, arrived, and riding up to Prince Albert, informed his highness, in few words, that an unexpected circumstance had prevented the margrave arriving at the time he first intended, but, God willing, would meet his illustrious son and his lordly companions at the evening banquet.

"My sovereign and father is well, I trust?" said the prince—"and her highness is also well?"

"I was not charged to say otherwise," replied the messenger, "but I saw neither his highness nor your august mother, prince, before I set out; I received my orders from Count Saarsden."

"'Tis well," replied Albert; "you may retire."

The courier obeyed, and the prince, turning his horse's head, rode briskly up a gentle ascent, to where the *élite* of the company

had assembled, doubtless to speculate on the import of the tidings brought by the margrave's messenger.

"I would wager this good steed," said Prince Charles, in a sarcastic tone, "that my worthy uncle has been at his old tricks, and has sent this man to forbid my cousin joining in his favourite amusement: he gave but a reluctant consent at the best. But, here comes Albert, and, by my faith, he smiles!—well, for once I have done his highness injustice. Ha! gentle kinsman; what tidings from court?—no evil hath befallen there, I trust?"

"Not that I know of, Charles; the messenger merely came to announce the unavoidable delay of my father's appearance till the evening banquet. Had there been anything of unpleasant import, I should doubtless have been informed. I shall now no longer tax your patience. Let the horns sound: to horse—to horse, my masters!"

So saying, and wheeling gaily round, he gave the signal, and in the next moment the old towers and woods of Hermanstadt

echoed to the loud and cheerful tones of the hunting-horn.

On first setting out, the two princes headed the party, but in the ardour of the chase they became insensibly mingled with their companions. It is not my intention to give a description of this memorable chase, or relate the perils to which many of the party were exposed, suffice it to say, the sport was deemed good, though the grim tenant of the forest had not, at a late period of the day, yielded to the hopes of his eager pursuers, and towards the hour of vespers many of the train were forced to abandon the chase, and return wearied and discomfited to the castle. Those, however, who remained (the two princes were among the number) still pursued the grisly monster, whose sides, covered with blood, dust, and foam, heaved painfully, and seemed to promise a speedy victory to those who pressed so eagerly on his lagging steps. Prince Albert and his cousin, straining every nerve, again headed the party; already had they far outstripped their com-



rades—already had the former raised his spear to deal the death blow, when the latter sprang before him, and urging on his horse, in less time than it takes to relate the circumstance, all had vanished from the eager and amazed eyes of Prince Albert.

Some little time elapsed before my hero could recover from the surprise into which the sudden disappearance of Prince Charles had thrown him; he looked around, but the scene was strange to his view: wild and lonely, rocks and trees bounded his sight on every side; not a sound, even the most distant, met his ear. The contrast, from the late cheerful scene, was striking, and for a moment the idea of Florenzo's prohibition returned to his recollection, but his buoyant mind was not calculated to retain, for any length of time, disagreeable impressions.

“Tush!” said he, aloud, as if pursuing the chain of his thoughts; “some crag has, doubtless, shut him so suddenly from my view: the light is imperfect. I will ride on and see, and if I do not find him, I will wind my horn; perchance a straggler may hear, and

answer its well-known note. Some of our companions must be at hand."

So saying, he essayed to advance, but to his astonishment his hitherto obedient steed, with all his urging, would not proceed one single step, and when he applied the spur, snorted and reared, and had not the prince been an expert horseman, he certainly could never have maintained his seat. In the midst of this contention, faint cries met his ear, and ever and anon the clash of swords was mingled with the sounds of distress.

"Can that be Charles in peril!" exclaimed Albert, starting, and straining his eyes in the direction from whence the sounds proceeded. "Has he fallen into the hands of marauders? Too surely he has; and those cries proceed from him. I will hasten to his rescue."

But to say and do are two things; for Prince Albert and his good steed Orlando had taken decidedly different views of the subject, and the more eager the former appeared to ride forward, the more resolutely

bent on remaining where he was appeared the latter.

“Art thou bewitched, Orlando?” exclaimed the prince, angrily. “By my certes you never showed this humour before; had you, you and I had not been such friends.”

But do what he could, the animal was resolutely determined to have its own way; and fatigued with the renewed strife, the prince, throwing the reins on the neck of his contumacious charger, was about to throw himself from his back, when a slight rustle among the bushes behind him arrested his purpose, and turning half round, he said in a raised voice, “Who moves there?” At first no answer was returned to his question, and for a minute or two all was silent; again something moved, and the prince, in a still louder voice, repeated his query, at the same time half unsheathing his *couteau de chasse*, to be prepared for any contingency that might happen.

By this time the last faint light of day had melted into the sober grey of twilight, and the deep obscurity that surrounded

him prevented him from seeing anything distinctly, even at the shortest distance.

While Albert's hand was in the very act of drawing his sword, or hunting-knife, a deep and hollow voice, almost at his ear, bade him desist.

"Thou art in no danger, young man," said the mysterious intruder; "foes menace not thy life, though thou art *within sight of the proscribed limits of Schwartzwald*. Another, and one dear to thee, is now incurring the risk that would have been thine, hadst thou advanced but two steps further: return thy weapon to its sheath, and hasten to the rescue of thy cousin; he is fearfully beset. There!—hearest thou that cry? Look, look! see how they press him!"

"Where?" cried Albert, starting; "I see nought, not even you, though your voice sounds at my very elbow."

A loud hoarse laugh followed this remark, and the prince felt a smart tap on his shoulder: he started, stretched forth his arm, and waved it in all directions, but nothing impeded its motion.

“It is useless to seek what is not palpable to the touch,” observed the mysterious speaker: “attend to my words, which are to be depended upon, and be not over-curious about the person of the speaker. List, prince ! Under a sacred promise of not entering Schwartzwald, wert thou permitted to partake of this day’s amusement—a star-gazing fool, tampering with the weak and silly fears of an over-anxious father, caused thee to be thus fettered. I will not say his prescience is to be despised, but if thou wouldst be a man, thou must despise and defy danger. Death may overtake thee at any moment, but why more in Schwartzwald than in any other region ? But while we thus parley, thy kinsmen’s life is in peril : no time should be lost. I will be thy guide ; say the word, and we are gone.”

“I would peril a thousand lives, did I possess them, to serve my cousin, at his need,” replied the prince ; “but I would see and know the person of him I now hold converse with. I acknowledge your information respecting my promise to my

father is correct; but how came you so familiar with me and my concerns?—how know I that you are not the enemy I should shun?"

"If I were, thou art already in my power; and know, prince, there are more in this world gifted with prescience than old Florenzo, though they gain not their knowledge by reading the stars. Come, come, let me guide thee to the scene of strife; thy cousin bears himself bravely, but he cannot much longer sustain the conflict. If thou fallest in the struggle, thou wilt die the death of the brave—if thou preferrest thy own safety and thy senseless promise to thy sire, to the claims of humanity and honour, adieu for ever!—live, Albert of Swabia; but live, dishonoured and despised!"

"You said just now," said the prince, "that you saw my cousin and his assailants. How can I believe that possible, when the unusual darkness of the evening forbids my seeing objects even near at hand? Pardon me, if I say I think, for some sinister purpose, you are imposing on

me. If I possessed your faculty of vision, I might then no longer hesitate. Show me the combatants—show me Charles—and then I will believe you, but not till then.”

The unseen tempter of the unfortunate Albert here laughed scornfully.

“That shift, young man, will not avail thee. Doubtless thou thinkest thou hast over-taxed my skill; but turn thine eyes eastward, and be convinced of thy error. Keep a strong rein on thy steed; he is about to be restive.”

The stranger's latter assertion was here fully verified, for the horse snorted, tossed his head, and showed many other signs of extreme impatience. After some exertion, Albert succeeded in calming him, and then doing as he was directed, turned his eyes to the east, but not without sensations of deep awe and intense curiosity; hardly daring to look, yet eager above all things to have his doubts and fears dissipated or confirmed by what he should see in that direction.

“Well!” again said the voice—“what seest thou?”

"A group of persons in the distance, engaged in an affray, and one of the figures wears the form of my cousin!" replied Albert, a thrill of indescribable horror running through his veins as he spoke. "Art thou a demon, unseen being? or by what art, less than that of magic, dost thou illumine the murky night. Avaunt, unholy thing! Leave me to myself—yonder is all illusion; Charles is not in peril! Avaunt, I say, fiend of mystery! If thou wert a corporeal substance, thou would show thyself; nothing but guilt need thus hide itself from sight. Holy Jesu, defend me!"

A scream, as if a thousand demons were in agony, burst on the startled ear of Prince Albert, in reply to the above exclamation; at the same time, the distant light and objects it displayed died entirely away, while his horse, as if urged onward by some powerful incitement, darted forward, and ere his excited rider could restrain him, he was in full career, while a loud voice from behind exclaimed—



"Thou hast passed the goal—thou hast entered Schwartzwald, and more hast thou to dread in its dark region than the demons who are said to lurk in its deep caves!"

"Heaven," said the prince, in reply, "will pardon me this involuntary breach of faith, and the Virgin Mother of God will guard me from the powers of evil!"

Another scream, or rather yell, louder than the former, was the only reply to this speech; and the speed with which Orlando (in spite of his previous fatigue) proceeded, soon bore his rider far from the scene of his late extraordinary adventure.

Involved in darkness and doubt, Prince Albert hardly knew what to do. At one moment he believed his cousin in danger; the next, he doubted every circumstance connected with his late adventure, and was half tempted to turn about and retrace his way, when the clash of swords once more struck on his ear, and the loudness of the noise convinced him he could not be far from the scene of strife. All the apprehension he had so lately felt on his cousin's

account returned with redoubled force, and, abandoning all intention of returning, he continued his career, though frequently much impeded by the trees, and brushwood, which was particularly thick in that quarter. Having cleared an unusually tangled maze of thorns and briers, Albert came suddenly on a plain, the extent of which he could measure by means of a faint and indistinct light, which appeared to proceed from a clump of trees at a little distance. The noise of contention appeared now to grow louder every moment, and human voices were mingled with the din of arms; he even thought he heard his cousin cry for quarter. Anxious to apprise his kinsman of his approach, and at the same time intimidate the assailing ruffians, he shouted aloud, and burying his spurs in the smoking sides of his steed, made a last and vigorous effort to reach the spot so pregnant with peril to his beloved relative. While my hero was thus generously bent on succouring his cousin, or perishing in the attempt, a noise from behind, like the rapid

advance of a horse, arrested his attention. Thinking that it was one of his late companions in quest of him and his cousin, he turned hastily round, when his eye caught the sudden flashing of a deadly weapon close at his back. The impulse of the moment, which prompted him to spring aside, and the exclamation which accompanied the motion, doubtless saved his life, for the "Jesu defend me!" was again answered by such an unearthly yell, that the horse once more took fright at the horrid sound, and in spite of his master's coercing hand, darted madly forward, and plunging into the midst of the group of trees already mentioned, stumbled, and in the next moment the alarmed prince felt the earth give way, and, ere he could extricate himself from this new peril, he found himself sinking rapidly into the bowels of the earth.

It would be in vain to attempt portraying Albert's horror and astonishment, when, after the lapse of a few minutes, he found himself in a dark and unknown region—on firm ground, it is true, but, whether in the

den of robbers or of wild beasts, he knew not. When, however, he began to recover from the first stunning effects of his accident, he sprang from his saddle, and drawing his trembling horse a few paces forward, began to explore his way alone through the darkness that surrounded him on every side.

He surmised that he was in one of those subterranean regions so common in Schwartzwald, and which were too generally either the retreat of banditti or the lair of wild beasts; and it was no pleasant reflection to believe himself the guest of either the one or the other. Having groped his way, with outstretched arms, for some paces, Albert at length encountered an impediment, which he supposed the side of the cave, from its irregular and humid surface. How far this subterranean chamber extended, he had no means of ascertaining—to his excited imagination, it appeared interminable.

As long as his patience lasted, he continued to advance with much laudable cau-

tion; but my unfortunate hero was not blessed with an overstock of that godlike attribute. Little by little, this most necessary virtue faded away, and at length totally fled, leaving him the prey of almost total despair. It was not long, however, he suffered this enervating feeling to supersede that of necessary exertion; he blushed at his folly, and once more proceeded. How long he thus stumbled on in the dark, he could scarcely surmise; but from ignorance of the way, and that nameless dread, of which, even the bravest cannot, in some situations, divest themselves, it is probable the time appeared, in his estimation, much longer than it really was. Security, at length, induced him to dispense with some of those precautions he had hitherto used. Most eager to arrive at some termination to his disagreeable pilgrimage, he stepped on more rapidly than prudence authorized, and ere he had taken ten steps, once more felt his footing give way, and being unable to recover himself, sunk into the earth, or rather slipped down a precipice, but not

so uninjured as before: in his descent he struck himself against the rugged rock, and lay many moments, deprived of recollection, at its base. When he had recovered sufficiently to rise, he found some difficulty in walking, having received several severe contusions; but so anxious was he to regain his freedom, that he set pain at defiance, and once more advanced, hoping every moment to discover some opening by which he might regain the open air. This subterranean chamber, unlike the former, was not entirely dark; but the light was so faint, he could by no means ascertain whether it proceeded from a fire or the moon, which he concluded must be risen by that time, and might have found its way through some opening which might also facilitate his emancipation.

He now deeply regretted having abandoned his horse, though in his second fall the poor animal might not have escaped so well as in his first; but it was useless to repine, though he had little hope of regaining his valued steed, and he could not help

heaving a sigh to the fate of the attached animal which, till that fatal night, had borne him safely, and which on every occasion had appeared to possess more than the usual sagacity of his species.

Rousing his fainting energies, though still smarting under his bruises, he slowly, and with renewed caution, advanced towards the spot from whence the light issued. Persuaded now, almost past doubt, that he was in the cave of banditti, he expected at every step to encounter some of its ferocious inmates, and firmly grasping his *couteau de chasse*, which he still retained, he was resolved to make a desperate struggle for his life and liberty. Thus anticipating the worst, he advanced towards the light, which he perceived, on a nearer approach, was hidden from view by a jutting crag. If it was the moon that thus faintly illumed the cavern, he trusted the opening would be wide enough to afford him the means of egress; and cheered by so pleasing a thought, he advanced as quickly as the pain of his bruises would permit. At

length he rounded the barrier, and a most unexpected scene met his view—a scene which sent the warm blood in a rushing tide to his cheeks, and caused his heart to beat violently against his side. So deep, indeed, was his surprise, that with extreme difficulty he restrained a cry. Reader, thou wilt be also as much astonished as my hero, when I tell thee, that he saw two females, (seated at a table, on which stood a lamp,) the one well advanced in years, the other in the first spring of youth and beauty. For a moment the young man stood rooted to the spot; in the next, he advanced on tiptoe, holding his breath lest his very breathings should dissolve the pleasing vision—for at first he could hardly deem it other than a tissue of that night's wonders, though wearing a far different and more seductive form.

The recluses were conversing, but in so low a key that the prince heard not distinctly a word they uttered. Yet the silver-toned voice of the younger female thrilled through his heart, causing a new and



strange emotion to pervade his frame, and convincing him he beheld beings of mortal, not immortal coil.

Though the prince stepped as lightly as possible, the unusual sound of footsteps, faint as it was, arrested the attention of the females. At the same moment they both directed their eyes to the same spot, and at the same moment they both beheld the intruder; for starting up, and uttering a loud cry, they appeared preparing to make a precipitate retreat.

Albert, fearful of losing sight of those mysterious beings, sunk on his knee, and casting his sword from him, clasped his hands, and with an entreating look and a deprecatory voice, conjured them not to flee, but stay and listen to his account of the strange accident which had made him a most inadvertent intruder on their privacy.

By this time the violence of their first panic had in a great measure subsided—indeed, the prince's manner and whole bearing was well calculated to disarm suspicion; but the elder female, though no longer a

prey to fear, evinced great embarrassment, and often turned her eyes to the remote extremity of the cave with an uneasiness she could by no means either control or conceal. On the other hand, the lovely and animated features of her young companion wore a very different expression, glowing at one moment with a sentiment of intense curiosity, and at another, with unrepressed admiration. The prince still knelt—still gazed with earnest entreaty on the mysterious inhabitants of the cave, when, at length, the elder female said, in a gentle voice—

“ Rise, stranger, and quickly explain by what untoward accident you came hither.”

“ Untoward, indeed, madam, you may well call the accident,” replied Albert, “ that led me to your presence ; but be assured no sinister or unworthy motive, not even the remotest knowledge of your being here, led me to intrude upon you.”

He then gave a short and guarded account of the unfortunate events which had led him thither, carefully withholding,

however, every circumstance that could in any way terrify his auditors. When he had concluded his recital, the elder lady said—

“ I will not attempt to disguise the deep regret I feel at your discovery of this our lone retreat. Whether it arose from accident or design, the result is equally unfortunate to us; but, from the latter, I think I can acquit you: the ingenuousness of your air and manner makes it almost impossible for me to doubt your truth and honour. I will therefore throw myself entirely on your generosity, and request that you will pledge your knightly word (for I see you wear the gold spurs) to conceal from every one the mystery of our existence within the limits of your own bosom.”

Perplexed at all he saw and heard, the prince gazed alternately from one lady to the other, and some minutes elapsed ere he had summoned sufficient resolution to give the required assurance. At length he did so, and the matron, smiling, said—

“ Enough; I am perfectly satisfied: may Heaven hear and register your vow!”

Then turning to her young companion, she said—

“Garnish the board, my child; doubtless our guest, after a long day’s chase, will be glad of some refreshment. Our fare is very simple,” pursued she, apologetically; “nevertheless, be assured it is given in the true spirit of hospitality: were it better, you should be equally welcome. Advance, sir knight, and take your seat.”

Thus encouraged, the prince, with a graceful bow, obeyed. His bruises were no longer remembered; and as he partook of some good bread and dried fruit, he conversed with his entertainer, and glanced furtively from beneath his long eye-lashes at her lovely companion. Never had Albert, amid the beauties of his father’s court, seen aught to compare with the young recluse. Her youth, her innocence, the romance of her situation—above all, her extreme grace and beauty—wrought so powerfully on the ardent Albert, that ere he had been five minutes in her company he was plunged whole ages in love, and, in his secret soul,

swore—but no matter what. He was young and inconsiderate, and an oath sworn by one so circumstanced would not, perhaps, be deemed very binding by many of my readers. Once or twice during his repast the prince had attempted to engage the young beauty in conversation, but the elder female always answered for her, and at length, on a signal from her watchful guardian, she arose, and slightly courtesying to the prince, retired.

Deeply disappointed, Albert gazed after her retreating figure; and when she had disappeared from his view, he seemed suddenly plunged in darkness, and deprived of hope. He could not forbear casting a reproachful glance on his hostess, who seemed to understand him, for she shook her head; he smiled languidly at the implied reproof, and, casting down his eyes, continued for many minutes totally silent. The strangeness and novelty of his own situation had hitherto driven the idea of his cousin's danger from his mind; but just at this moment it returned with full and painful

force to his recollection, and, starting up, he said—

“I must go, lady; too long have I trespassed on your hospitality. Put me in the way of quitting these caves, and you will add another obligation to the many I already owe you.”

“You told me,” replied the matron, “you had a horse in one of the caverns; we must see if we can find him: he will be very useful to you in your retreat, as the only egress from hence (that I know of, or at least, that is available to you) is over a deep ravine. The moon is now up, and by her light you will be able to leap the chasm. Come, let us go in quest of your steed.”

So saying, the matron took the lamp and a ball of twisted yarn (the end of which was tied to the table) in her hand, and motioning to her companion to follow, she advanced, but not by the way he had entered. As they proceeded, the prince ventured to ask if her residence in these dismal caves was the effect of choice or constraint.

“Of necessity, not constraint,” replied the lady, sighing; “choice has little to do

with it; but ask no questions, I pray you—I cannot answer them.”

Albert begged her pardon, and pursued his way in silence. After numberless windings, sometimes ascending and sometimes descending, the prince found himself in a cave, which his conductress informed him was of immense extent. The lamp she carried but faintly illuminated the murky gloom; yet the little that was discernible, convinced Albert it was rich in petrifications, spars, and crystallines, those glittering and fantastic treasures of the lower world. But, notwithstanding all its splendour and wild beauty, what an abode for two helpless women! In spite, therefore, of his late rebuff, he could not help expressing his astonishment that such a dismal abode should shelter such inmates.

The lady replied, sighing deeply as she spoke—“We are isolated beings; unfortunate, but not guilty. Leave us to that quiet security in which you found us; and never, as you value your soul’s future hope, seek us again; and were it possible, I would bid

you blot this night's adventure from your memory for ever."

"I would do much, lady, to prove my gratitude for your kindness," replied the prince, "but to make such a promise would be useless, for I could not keep it. No, madam; sooner would I promise to part with my life, than the delightful recollection of some of the transactions of this night."

"Come this way," said the matron, not appearing to notice his words, "I think I see something yonder; perhaps it is your horse. Poor creature! by this time he must be heartily weary of his situation. Speak; doubtless he will know your voice."

The prince obeyed his conductress' wish, and the kind greeting was answered by a loud neigh, at the same time the generous animal advanced to meet his master.

"My poor Orlando," exclaimed the prince, patting and stroking the glossy sides of his favourite—"I thought but now that I should never have seen thee again!" A tear started to his eye, and he continued to ca-



ress the animal, as he led him, by the direction of the recluse, through that cave to another of smaller dimension.

"These subterraneans appear endless," observed the prince to his companion.

"They are very extensive, I must confess," she replied; "but we are now advancing to the opening I mentioned to you a moment ago. See, yonder it is; and the beautiful moon is shining with all her splendour in the azure vault of heaven."

"Welcome, queen of night!" exclaimed Albert. "Welcome, breath of heaven! which I now feel fanning my cheek."

"You have every cause for thankfulness," replied the matron; "and when you are safe beyond these dark regions, return thanks where they are most due. I would now have you examine the chasm; it is, I believe, about half a rood across, and slopes outward: by the help of your steed you may (I have no doubt) pass it in safety."

The prince followed the lady's directions, while she, placing her lamp in a

niche to keep it from being extinguished, hastened after him.

"Do you think you can leap that dark gulf?" inquired the recluse, shuddering as she looked into the deep abyss. "Be certain of your horse's power, ere you tempt your fate: certain death must follow the failure of your attempt."

"I wish, lady, I was as sure of seeing you and"—he stammered and blushed, but soon recovering himself, continued—"of seeing you again, as I am of being able to leap that chasm, and I should be happy; but once over that cruel barrier, and I lose sight of you for ever. The idea gives me indescribable pain."

"Think of nothing but your safety," said the recluse, faintly smiling. "What you leave behind here is not worth a second thought. Come, come, mount, and away!—the night wanes."

"Lady, adieu!" said the prince, profoundly bowing. "I would again repeat my thanks, but words would fail to express all I feel. In spite of every obstacle, per-

haps we may meet again. I would not lose that pleasing idea, on any consideration whatever. In the meantime, I would entreat you not to forget the hunter who owes so much to your kindness and attention."

"You will not be forgotten, trust me," said the matron. "Adieu! may God bless and preserve you, and conduct you in safety to your home and friends!"

A tear stood on her faded cheek as she spoke; the prince saw it, and sighed, kissed his hand, and hastily turning away, mounted his horse, and in the next moment was safe on the outside of the cavern.

When Albert found himself in security, he turned to take another and a last view of the mysterious stranger. She was standing on the spot where he had bade her a last adieu; when she observed him turn, she waved her 'kerchief, and once more commending him to the protection of God and the saints, she suddenly disappeared from view, and with her all traces of the cavern's mouth was lost. A tangled screen of waving lichens, clinging shrubs, and the interlacing

branches of the forest trees, completely excluded it from the eye of casual observation.

After gazing silently and thoughtfully for a few minutes on the spot so full of romance and interest, and heaving another sigh to the memory of its mysterious inhabitants, he turned pensively away, and sought to discover some way of quitting the woody enclosure in which he appeared inextricably involved. Leaving the prince thus engaged, I will return with the lady to the interior cave. With a quick step, she retraced her lonely path, winding up the clue as she went on, and in due time found herself within the precinct of her more immediate home.

## PART II.

“ The Northern Bear lowers black and grim ;  
Orion's studded belt is dim ;  
Twinkling faint, and distant far,  
Skimmers through mist each planet star :  
Ill may I read their high decree.”

“ Till pride be quelled and love be free.”

“ He learned the art, that none may name,  
In Padua, far beyond the sea ;  
Men said he changed his mortal frame  
By feat of magic mystery.”

SCARCELY had the matron entered at one extremity of the cavern, when a man appeared at the other ; he advanced like one used to the place, and familiar with its inhabitants. He bore a lamp and a basket, and was entirely enveloped in a long cloak. He advanced without ceremony, and ad-

dressed the lady in a friendly tone, who replied in the same strain, remarking that he was come in very good time.

"I fancied," replied the visitor, "you would have thought me unusually late; but it was not to be avoided. I could not elude observation sooner."

"I made no reference to the hour, Ernest," rejoined the recluse; "I merely meant that your coming at all to-night was most opportune, for had you been obliged to postpone your visit till to-morrow evening, we should have lacked provisions sadly."

"Lacked provisions sadly!" reiterated the visitor, in a tone of astonishment; "how is that? Surely the last basket was as well filled as usual."

"It was," replied the recluse, smiling faintly; "but hunters eat heartily, and a long day's chase generally creates a good appetite."

"You speak in riddles, Pauline," replied Ernest, staring at his companion. "Hunters! prithee, what have you to do with hunters? Do you rave, good sister?"

“By no means, brother. I have had a guest,” replied the lady.

“A guest! Mother of God—a guest!” reiterated the alarmed visitor.

“Even so,” was the quiet reply. “And one who, if I mistake not, of all others, we should have least wished to see. I think I cannot be mistaken; the nobleness of his mien, the frankness of his address, and, above all, his likeness to Duke Herman, convince me I have seen Prince Albert.”

“Impossible!” exclaimed the alarmed Ernest, interrupting his sister. “That can hardly be, for he is not permitted to visit Schwartzwald at this time. Yet God only knows. I did hear something of a hunting party at Hermanstadt. Yes, yes, it must be the prince. But how did he gain an entrance here without my knowledge? Did he see Conradine?—Did he suspect who you were?—Was his stay long?—In which way——”

“Stop, stop, Ernest, for Heaven’s sake!” exclaimed his sister; “one question at a time. How can you expect me to answer so many at once?”

"Answer the second, then, quickly," cried the impatient and actually trembling interrogator. "I am all anxiety."

"If the second refers to Conradine," replied the lady—"but you really put so many, I hardly know how they stand—I answer, he did see her, and was much and deeply interested with her appearance; but wishing to withdraw her from his too earnest gaze, I sent her to her chamber."

"That was prudently done. Now reply to the rest, my dear Pauline: it is important that I should have every one answered as briefly as possible."

Having done so, the lady, in her turn, was about to put some questions to her visitor, but he excused himself, saying, he could not stay one minute longer; but, if the morning proved fine, and nothing occurred to prevent him, he would be with her in time for their usual promenade. Obligated to be satisfied with this promise, the recluse saw her kind visitor depart with an unusual feeling of regret; and feeling no inclination to sleep, sat down, and was



soon buried in a profound reverie, of which the strange events of the day formed no inconsiderable feature. I shall take the liberty of leaving the lady thus employed, to follow the steps of my hero, who, after riding up a gentle but rugged ascent, and through some tangled brushwood, and low gnarled oak-trees, found himself on a plain of no great extent, on the farther extremity of which rose a lofty and dark pile of building, which he surmised was either a baronial residence or a religious structure: in either the one or the other, he hoped to get shelter for the night. He felt his bruises become every moment more painful; and, touching his horse lightly with the spur, he set off at a gentle canter towards the building.

Hardly, however, had he measured half the plain, when he saw several horsemen advancing from the right to intercept him: these, he made no doubt, were plunderers, and the hoarse and loud manner in which they hailed him soon put the matter entirely out of doubt.

“Stand!” said one of the gang, riding

briskly forward. "You have kept us here a pretty time—but where are your companions? How is it that you are alone?"

"I know no right you have to question me," said the prince, still pursuing his way. "Whether I choose to ride here alone, or in company, can be nothing to you. Keep back, my friend, or——"

"Or what, my master?" cried the ruffian, fiercely. "Do you mean to threaten? Are you so powerful, that you think to scare me with your *ors*? On, Matis! and let us see of what metal this spark is made. His words are big; but cowards are generally boasters."

The prince, seeing it useless to attempt escaping, reined up his horse, and drawing his *couteau de chasse*, prepared to defend himself. But what could one man, so slightly armed, do against four or five powerful and fierce brigands, whose trade was plunder, and who would rather sacrifice fifty lives than lose the chance of a good booty. The prince, however, did not yield so easily as they expected. In the onset, he desperately wounded one of the gang, and had

nearly succeeded in giving a *coup de grace* to a second, when the man who had first addressed him, and who appeared to be the captain, threw himself from his horse, and, rushing forward, buried his poniard in the heart of Orlando. The generous steed made one fearful bound, and then fell dead on the plain. Entangled with his falling horse, and wounded in his sword-arm, Albert must, in a few minutes, have yielded to his assailants, had not the sudden and near approach of many persons, bearing lights, and hallooing at the highest pitch of their voices, alarmed the brigands, who, seeing that the number of the new-comers far exceeded their own, fled; and Albert, faint with exertion, pain, and loss of blood, sank senseless on the body of his dead horse; and in this melancholy situation was, a few minutes after, discovered by the Baron Romana and his domestics, who were evidently in search of him, but who were certainly little prepared to find him in such a melancholy and (as they feared at the first glance) hopeless condition. Shocked, and deeply

grieved, the baron assisted in raising the prince from his bloody bed, and, laying him in his own large cloak, had him borne as gently as possible to the castle.

Some time elapsed ere the prince thoroughly awoke to a sense of his real situation; when, however, he was able to note external objects, he was not a little astonished to find himself the tenant of his old chamber at Romana, with the good baron of that title seated by his bedside.

The baron expressed unfeigned joy at witnessing the happy change in his beloved pupil, but faithful to his promise to Eugenio, he would not suffer him to speak, anxious as the young man appeared to put various questions to him.

"Be patient and still," said the baron, in a whisper. "I expect your old preceptor here every moment; he is only gone for his *infallible* balsam. Should he find you talking when he returns, I should have to endure a long lecture, and be deprived, perhaps, of the pleasure I experience in sitting by your bed."

"But you will surely tell me how I came hither?" interposed the prince, in a feeble voice.

"Not a word at present," rejoined the pertinacious baron, quietly closing the curtains.

Albert sighed, but felt too weak to remonstrate with his judicious friend. Quiet and silence certainly suited his situation best, and composing himself to sleep, ere di Florenzo returned, was enjoying a slumber that seemed likely to do him as much good as all that sapient doctor's nostrums put together.

It is hardly necessary to say, the Baron Romana and *that* Ernest, who met the recluse on her return to the cave, were one and the same: this will account for his timely appearance in the forest, whither he hastened immediately, on quitting his sister. A secret presentiment led him to apprehend danger to the stranger, whoever he might be. Should the hunter, as he styled himself, prove the prince, affection as well as loyalty prompted him to lose no time in seeking

him; and descending from his chamber, he told his servants (whom he ordered to arm, and attend him with lights) that he fancied he heard the sound of contention in the quarter contiguous to the forest. As this was not the first time the baron had issued forth on a similar errand, his present determination created no surprise, and his people were prompt in their preparations to attend him. He well knew the road the unknown must take, on quitting the caverns, and in that direction he led his party. He had hardly cleared his own gates, when he heard the loud and menacing voices of the bandits, and, as he advanced farther, could plainly see their forms in the clear moonlight. Certain that the person he was in search of was beset by these miscreants, he ordered his men to shout aloud, and advancing rapidly, soon arrived at the scene of conflict, but not soon enough to arrest any of the robbers, or to prevent the mischief which his worst fears presaged. Who can speak the good baron's horror, as, bending over the body of the wounded man, he

recognised in his pale and bloody features those of Prince Albert.

"'Twas then, indeed, as we surmised," said he, mentally; "and Pauline's visitor was my amiable pupil. Oh, if he is no more, who shall dare to bear the fatal tidings to his doting father!"

What followed the baron's timely intervention has been already related, and while the prince sleeps, it will afford me time and opportunity to speak of his mediciner, Doctor Eugene or Eugenio di Florenzo, and to notice some other events connected with this story.

To begin, then, with the doctor. Eugenio di Florenzo was an Italian by birth, and nearly approached at this period his eightieth year; time, however, to all appearance, had dealt very gently by him. His tall form was still erect, his lofty brow smooth, and the fire of his large, deep-set black eyes hardly less bright than in the meridian of a life that had seen many and strange vicissitudes.

From earliest youth till a late period of

his existence, di Florenzo had been a wanderer. Every known country had he visited: from the plains of the burning East to the shores of the Frozen Ocean; from the confines of Europe to the interior of Africa. On the banks of the Ganges, he had communed with the descendants of Brahma, and held discourse with the astrologers of Chaldea, amid those scenes, and perhaps on the very spot, where the pious and prophetic Daniel worshipped the God of his fathers, or where the trembling Belshazzar saw the mysterious hand tracing his sudden and awful doom. Necessity had led Florenzo to study the healing art, and, to do him justice, he was by no means a contemptible physician; but, as is often the case, the doctor held in little esteem what the world in general deemed the most useful of his attainments, and never exerted his leechcraft except in cases of great emergency; and it is more than probable he would have given up the profession altogether, had it not been for his infallible balsam, of which he was not a little vain, the secret of compounding which



he had obtained from an Arabian physician, to whom a happy accident rendered him eminently useful.

As the *astrologer* (for he preferred that title to the one of doctor) advanced in years, he grew tired of the itinerant life he led, and began to think seriously of settling himself; yet, was it not easy to fix upon the spot of his future sojourn. While he was debating this weighty question in his mind, he heard by accident that the Margrave of B—— was the sworn patron and believer in his favourite study, and that, at that very time he was inviting all the disciples of the astrological school to his court, for the purpose of deciding on some moot point he chose to think of vital importance.

On Eugenio's arrival at B——, he found some of the first astrologers of the age assembled to take an active part in the discussion. Our adept, from his long experience, his advanced age, and various acquirements, was expected to make a conspicuous figure in the assembly. Not a

little vain of his knowledge, which, to do him justice, was extensive, he had few fears of being able to confute those who were bold enough to meet him in the field of controversy. He went to the fight, armed at all points, and was listened to by most of the assembly with wonder and delight.

Those who did not exactly coincide with him in opinion, were nevertheless charmed with his eloquence, and when everything was said that the subject admitted, by the various disputants, the umpire adjudged the doctor to have the best of the argument. Each member of the assembly silently acquiesced in this decision, save Carl von Hoffman, who had the temerity to challenge his opponent to a wordy war, but the unfortunate Carl greatly overrated his abilities when he took a step so bold and decided. He little knew the endless resources of the man he thus daringly attacked. Eugenio listened patiently to all he had to advance, and then replied in a speech so full of beauty, force, and eloquence, that Hoffman was completely silenced. Shame at his de-

feat—envy at the success of his rival, and that rival, as he said, a mere adventurer—so worked upon him, that he actually fell sick, and in a very short time died of a broken heart, leaving the field open to his successful but certainly not exulting opponent.

The margrave, who had been present at the above discussion, conceived such an exalted opinion of Eugenio's abilities, that he insisted on his remaining at B——, settled on him, unasked, an ample pension, and appointed him a handsome suite of chambers in his own palace.

Shortly after this arrangement, the margrave became a father, and the adept was immediately called upon to cast the nativity of the little stranger. It was not, however, easy for even one of his consummate skill to reconcile all the apparent incongruities which the horoscope presented to his view. He was reluctant, at first, to lay before the margrave the result of his labours, but the anxious father would not be satisfied till he knew what destiny had in store for his child,

be it of good or evil. Therefore, however unwillingly, the astrologer was forced to be explicit, and from his unwilling confidence arose much real anxiety, nay, apprehensive misery to the parent, and much painful restraint to the unfortunate child.

The margravine sincerely deplored her consort's infatuation. If she did not entirely reject those speculations he so much delighted in, she had still too much strength of mind to place such a firm reliance on them as he did, and she tried, by every effort in her power, to wean him from the society of men who were constantly filling his head with wild theories and his heart with agonizing fears; but, alas ! without effect. The doctor kept his ground; and when old enough to profit by his instructions, the young prince was placed under his tuition.

The astrologer was well qualified for the office imposed on him, and as the margravine took no small pains to disgust her son with astrology, she had few fears of his holding that science in the esteem and re-

verence his father did. But this precaution was unnecessary; the prince suffered too much restraint, and too many privations, in consequence of Eugenio's predictions, to become enamoured of the science, or attached to its professors. Still he was obliged to pay an implicit obedience to the adept, although, unhappily, his inclinations were but too apt to run counter to his commands, as, indeed, how could it well be otherwise, when those commands all tended to restrict his liberty, and fetter that free spirit which may be found inherent in every youthful heart.

From his birth, till he had completed his second lustrum, the astrologer asserted that the prince's horoscope, except on two occasions, wore an unclouded aspect. The first of these threatening periods occurred on the eve of his fourth, the second on the day of his completing his eighth year. It was possible, however, by watchfulness, that both these dangerous epochs might be passed in safety. Should that be the case, four more years of security would revolve;

but then again, for fifty-two lunar months, perils of no ordinary character would menace him: even the elements would be found unfriendly to him—water in particular; steel, also, was not to be trusted, nor was he to be placed in any situation where it was probable he might form attachments, either with male or female, of his own age: as the friendship of the former might prove his ruin, and any sentiments of youthful preference toward the latter could not fail of proving dangerous, particularly as his destiny in marriage was already fixed, and could not be averted without the direct consequences resulting from it; but as the bride, to whom fate, or the astrologer, had affianced the prince, might be in the moon, for aught he knew to the contrary, nothing more at this time can be said respecting her.

After the above danger-teeming years were passed, if passed in safety they happily might be, four other years of perfect security lay before him, and to this period his anxious mother looked with no little im-

patience, as her only hope ; for hitherto, what with one folly or another, the prince had been prevented acquiring those accomplishments so necessary to form the knight and gentleman. Happily for the margravine, about this period, her consort found it necessary to visit Schwartzwald, to hold a personal conference with the Duke of W——, and being then relieved from all fears, on his son's account, he made both the margravine and prince the companions of his journey.

With a secret presentiment of something agreeable resulting from the removal, the margravine left B——, and as it seemed to her, half her cares behind her ; could she have left the other half, in the shape of the astrologer, she would have been completely happy ; but, alas ! that was a blessing too great to be hoped for, or even thought of, in the present state of her consort's mind, who grew every day more and more infatuated with the adept, looking up to him as to a being gifted with little less than super-human intelligence.

As the illustrious travellers must pass near the castle of Romana, the margrave proposed a visit to the baron, and the margravine joyfully acceded to the proposition, —why she did so, will be seen anon.

It was with a sentiment of unfeigned pleasure that the margrave greeted the man he had respected from his earliest youth. The baron, on his part, was proud of entertaining his prince beneath his roof, and sought, by every means in his power, to evince the sense he entertained of his condescension.

The youthful Albert he had not seen since the earliest days of infancy, and it was almost with paternal exultation he gazed on the promising boy. And now it was, that the margravine hoped to realize the views she had so long, but, till now, almost hopelessly indulged. To the baron she looked for advice, to him she addressed herself, into his indulgent ear she poured her griefs, and from him she met with the tenderest sympathy. But, alas! what could he do in such a delicate conjuncture? He



cheerfully promised to further any plan she should honour him by proposing, but confessed himself at a loss to advise, lest he might injure, by indiscreet zeal, the cause he wished to serve.

“Alas!” exclaimed the margravine, “I feared it would be so, but if I mention the affair, in your presence, to the margrave, will you coincide in my opinions?—will you do what you can to disabuse him, and open his eyes to the folly of keeping his son under the control of that mysterious di Florenzo? While he rules the boy’s actions, he will never be anything but a mere machine. He is now nearly sixteen, and he has acquired none of those exercises proper for his age and rank.

“Ah, madam!” replied the baron, “you have my utmost sympathy; but I fear it will not be easy to influence the margrave, or persuade him to alter his views with regard to his son; but I will not, for all that, discourage you from making the attempt. At any time you please to command, I will be in readiness to second with

my weak voice your laudable views; and I pray the blessed saints may dispose the heart of your illustrious consort to accede to your wishes."

Soon after this a favourable opportunity occurred. The margravine, with no little address, entered on the subject so near her heart; and both her highness and the baron were not a little surprised to witness the patience with which the margrave attended to her remarks. When she ceased speaking, Herman replied, addressing himself to her and Romana in the following words:—

"I know the system I pursue with our child is highly offensive to you, Sophia, and derided by many I could name (here the margrave glanced slightly towards Romana); but nevertheless I am only acting the part of a judicious and careful father, as those not blinded by gross prejudice would, I am sure, allow. However, it is not my present intention to enter on a vindication of my conduct, if, indeed, it can require any, but simply to say, that from recent observations, I have every reason to

believe we have nothing to fear for our child for the next four years; as that is the case, I do not see why the restrictions under which he has lately laboured should continue. I shall not oppose his remaining here for that term, if our worthy friend, the baron, will take charge of him. He is fully qualified to accomplish him as a knight and gentleman, and with him I feel he would be safe. What says Sophia—what says Romana, to my proposal? I hope it meets with their cordial concurrence.”

The margravine showed by her manner that it did; but a strict observer might have seen a slight contraction of the baron’s brow, a trifling change in the usual tone of his voice, as he assured the margrave he should be proud to render any service in his power to the prince, and that his castle and all it contained were at his disposal. The margrave, who certainly did not notice the baron’s embarrassment, made a suitable acknowledgment to his host, and the conference broke up.

On the following day, however, the mat-

ter was more fully discussed, and it was finally settled, that the prince and his preceptor, on their return from B——, should take up their abode at Romana. The baron was not pleased to find that Eugenio was also to become his guest; but after his profession, he could not with propriety object to the arrangement: he, however, resolved to be master in his own castle, and, in everything but scholastic learning, guide the conduct of the prince. He therefore let matters take their course; and in somewhat less than a month the noble youth and his suite became domesticated at Romana.

The four years of peace predicted to the margrave ensued, and the happy Albert improved daily, not only in grave and chivalrous exercises, but also in health and manly beauty. No longer harassed with superfluous and endless cautions, he became bold and active; and in the frequent visits he paid to the court, had the satisfaction to receive the commendation of both his admiring parents. Eugenio, in the meantime, being no longer under the margrave's eye,

abandoned himself almost entirely to his favourite study, and left the prince pretty much to himself. This happy circumstance, combined with the baron's care, made him all that was brave and amiable; and never had the worthy Romana cause to regret his introduction into his family. But the fourth year of the prince's residence at Romana drew to a close, and he must prepare to enter on a new scene. The marriage aroused the slumbering astrologer, and between them they made great discoveries. With horror, the anxious father found that the neighbourhood of Schwartzwald teemed with danger to the unfortunate Albert, and he was hastily recalled to B——. The happiness of the last four years had almost obliterated from the prince's mind all traces of the petty trials he had endured previous to that time, but the prospect of a return to his paternal home brought back painful reminiscences; and it was with a sentiment of the deepest regret he bade adieu to Romana and its beloved lord. The baron, on his part, was

equally concerned to lose his interesting and much endeared guest and pupil, but against the paternal fiat he knew there was no appeal, and he saw the prince depart with a feeling of depression he could neither define nor shake off.

Amid the sorrow the prince felt at quitting his knightly preceptor, one gleam of satisfaction broke through and dissipated the gloom—he left the astrologer behind him. Eugenio, who began to feel the weight of years, enjoyed the calm serenity of Romana, and was loath to quit it for the bustle of a court. He hinted a wish to the baron to remain in his family, provided it was agreeable to his sovereign, and not inconvenient to his host. Romana eagerly caught at the proposal, and sent to apprise the margravine, that she might urge her consort to grant the petitioner's prayer. The baron, as far as he was concerned in the affair, cared little whether di Florenzo remained or departed, but for the prince's sake he was willing to grant the adept an asylum, as by so doing he should have the

satisfaction of at least removing him from the immediate presence of his patron. Much entreaty was necessary to induce Herman to permit the astrologer to remain behind in Schwartzwald; he did, however, consent, and Prince Albert returned to B——, unattended by his learned preceptor. Who can speak the joy of the young man, on thus being freed from the irksome and perpetual control of a being who restricted his liberty, and saw danger and peril for him in the most innocent recreations; but his satisfaction was of short duration; for he was not long in discovering that the adept, in his solitary tower at Romana, had as great an influence over his father, and gave as strong a bias to his opinions, as if he were actually at his elbow. The prince lamented most sincerely this weakness; but that was all he could do: to fight against a rooted prejudice, is as vain as to seek to fetter the raging winds, or calm the turbulence of the impetuous ocean.

No sooner had the prince once more taken up his abode beneath the paternal

eye, than he received the strictest charge never, on any account, to enter Schwartzwald, nor, indeed, to pass the palace walls without his father's express permission. The margravine attempted first to reason, then to laugh her consort out of his fears, and represented in lively colours the probable effect this undue restraint would have on the prince's mind. All she could say, however, failed to alter the margrave's resolution, and Albert remained little better than a prisoner in the palace of his forefathers.

It was during the prince's residence at Romana, that his cousin, Prince Charles, became an occasional resident at his uncle's court.

This prince was the only child of the margrave's only brother, by a Bohemian princess. Partial to her own country, this lady persuaded her husband to give up Swabia, and reside in Bohemia, which he did till his death, an event which took place about the time his son had attained his twentieth year.



Prince Leopold, the father of Charles, being extremely anxious to obtain the margrave's countenance for his son, left him, for the term of his minority, to his guardianship; and about a year after Albert had become an inmate of Romana, his cousin arrived at B——; and when the former paid occasional visits at his father's court, he became acquainted with his insinuating kinsman, who, in spite of his secret feelings of hatred and envy, made a show of the utmost affection for the young and unsuspecting Albert, thereby hoping to find some means of drawing him into his toils, and freeing himself at once of a being he both hated and envied. Indeed, such was the impetuosity of his temper, such his thirst for greatness, that he might have resorted to some certain and speedy means (however unjustifiable and dangerous) of freeing himself from his detested rival, had not a being, who possessed a powerful and mysterious influence over his every action, restrained him.

This *being* was styled Julio, and acted as the prince's *page*.

In early youth, Prince Charles had been taken to Padua, for the advantage of the best masters; and there his evil destiny led him to the knowledge of a monk, named Gaufridi. This man was a pretender to a science inimical to virtue, but which was then, and long after, too generally believed and practised, even by the very magnates of the land. Gaufridi was connected with a set of men, or rather should I say, devils, who made it their chief business to seduce the unwary, (particularly if high-born and wealthy,) and by flattering their ruling passions and administering to their vices, in the end made them as criminal as themselves.

This guilty man was not long acquainted with Prince Charles, ere he discovered that the latent passions of his soul were pride and an inordinate ambition. Deep read in the human heart, he soon fathomed the secret wishes, the fondly-indulged hopes, of the aspiring prince, and, from their earliest acquaintance, marked him out for his prey.

"He will," said he, while speaking on the subject to a confederate, "do us in-

finite honour ; he was born to serve us : his father is rich, and he is his only child ; besides, he is his uncle's heir. One obstacle removed, and he will be in the line of immediate succession to the Margraviate of B——. That ancient prophecy I once mentioned to you must refer to him. In forwarding his ambitious views, we shall be gradually gaining the ascendancy ; our destinies are linked—we rise or fall together.”

When Charles was about to quit Italy, on completing his studies, he took a kind leave of the monk, and expressed either a real or feigned regret at losing his society.

“ I never yet got any one to understand me as you do,” said the prince, regretfully.

“ And perhaps never will,” replied Gaufridi. “ But take courage ; *we shall meet again*. A bright destiny lies before you. I see through the misty veil of futurity—see you eminently great and happy.”

“ Was that spoken in jest or in earnest ?” inquired the prince, impatiently.

“ When we meet again,” replied the monk, “ I will tell you. Adieu, for the present.”

They then parted; but the prince suffered much anxiety in consequence of the monk's prophetic speech, as he chose to think it.

Arrived at the palace of his father, the first person Charles beheld, on entering his chamber, was Gaufridi. He started back.

"What, so soon!" cried he; "how is it I see you here?"

"The strong wish I have to serve you," replied the monk, "induced me to take this decided step. An irresistible feeling draws me to you. There is much to admire in your character; and as I know you were born to sit among the high ones of the land, I come to declare my willingness to be your *slave*. I am also prepared to make myself acceptable to your sire; he must not know me for Gaufridi. This letter," holding one towards his dupe, "will effectually deceive him. He will think it written by the Duke di Mirandola, who recommends me as a youth such as his highness has been in quest of; the son of a worthy sculptor of Padua, poor, but honest, and well accomplished in the Italian language. I possess the means of changing my appearance so

effectually, that not even your highness shall know me, and, taking the name of Julio, shall serve you, in the character of an unpretending page."

So saying, the subtle impostor, by a dexterous trick, in a moment changed his appearance so entirely, that his dupe, with some indication of alarm, retired to a distant part of the chamber; and many minutes elapsed ere he could bring himself to suffer his mysterious companion to approach him. From that hour, however, the wretched, misguided Charles became the slave of his vile associate, who, in consequence of the pretended recommendatory letter from the Duke of Mirandola, was engaged by Prince Leopold to attend his son; and shortly after, that deluded father died, in happy ignorance of the dreadful compact formed between his guilty son and the magician of Padua.

That awful being, in the character he assumed, was constantly near his victim, whose willing ear was ever open to his delusive sophistry, and eagerly drank in the flattery of which the tempter was by no

**means** sparing. Still no definitive assurance **had** been made, no precise wish expressed; **and** thus matters stood when his highness **went** to reside at his uncle's court.

Gaufridi had now an opportunity of witnessing the struggles of his pupil's mind; the warfare between inordinate pride, ambition, self-love, and that faint shadow of virtue which perhaps holds a latent seat in the blackest heart. He saw it would be imprudent to leave the prince long in his present situation, particularly as the plots of **his** colleagues were not sufficiently **matured** for development; nor had he yet **reduced** the prince to that state of dependence on himself so necessary to the completion of his views. The villanous crew with **whom** Gaufridi was leagued seldom troubled **themselves** to make proselytes of the low-born and poor. Their arts were all directed **against** the noble and the rich; to **them** they stuck like leeches, while a penny remained in their coffers; and it was by no **means** Gaufridi's intention to abandon his **dupe** while his strong box contained one

piece of gold, or one fair castle called his lord. Besides the thirst of wealth which those wretches were assailed, another and as powerful a passion swayed their actions: they aimed at universal dominion. They had a tradition current amongst them that this was to be obtained through the medium of a Swabian prince and an Hungarian princess. When Gaufridi met Charles at Padua, and became acquainted with his character, he felt convinced that the very person alluded to in the prophecy above mentioned was before him: he therefore determined on attaching himself to him, availing himself of every opportunity of inflaming his ambition and of corrupting his heart. How well he succeeded, will be seen in the sequel.

Fortunately for the views of the monarch, but most unhappily for Prince Charles, the margrave about this time found it necessary to send an embassy to the court of Naples to congratulate the king on the birth of his heir. Wishing to please his nephew, who well knew was fond of variety, he pitched upon him for the bearer of his greeting

and, suitably attended, the young prince set out for that kingdom.

But no sooner was this mission executed, than Gaufridi, after dismissing the train, led his victim once more to Padua, where he assured him he was expected with anxiety by many friends. Charles was astonished, and inquired who they might be. "Those," replied the page, "who look up to you with eyes of hope; but ere you appear before them you must pledge yourself to *us*, soul and body. I know every wish of your heart, and they shall all be gratified, on one condition."

"Name it, mysterious being!" said the prince. "Keep me not in suspense; if you really know what my aspiring soul aims at—if you can help me to attain it, speak plainly: there are few things I would shrink from attempting, to accomplish the first, the darling object of my sleeping and waking visions."

Gaufridi whispered the prince, who started back.

"Ha!" cried he, turning pale; "so high a price?"



“ And why not?—Would you buy kingdoms as boys buy apples? But cheer up : you need not fear. We possess *that elixir* which will render you immortal : your earthly sojourn shall be prolonged to an endless infinitude. Youth and health, like the unfading amaranth, shall always attend your steps ; wealth and honours shall be yours : your conscience, that bugbear and disturber of mortal happiness, shall be silenced. What, then, have you to dread ? What, then, prevents your accepting my offer ?

“ The price ! the price !” cried the prince. “ Can I barter my soul’s eternal hope for perishable grandeur—for an earthly crown ?”

“ Then you do not believe me !” exclaimed Gaufridi, indignantly—“ you distrust my assurances. Well, be it so ! You abandon your ambition, and are content to vegetate in obscurity. Your mind is made up, and you can calmly witness the felicity of your cousin, to whom we must now turn our attention : *he* shall reap the rich harvest we intended for you—*he* shall be all you might have been, had you been able to shake off

vulgar prejudices, and soar above those narrow notions, instilled into your infant mind by the timid and priest-ridden. We must now part. Adieu, prince; may you be happy in your *low* estate!"

The monk motioned as if he meant to depart; Charles darted forward, and restrained him.

"You would not leave me!" he cried. "You would not thus abandon one who has so long suffered you to direct his steps! Your threats are cruel. Can you propose no middle course? will nothing but——alas! I cannot name the conditions; yet I had rather accede to them, dreadful as they are, than forego my long-indulged visions of greatness. Albert must perish!—I hate, I detest him! Accomplish his ruin—let me occupy his place, and then I shall be satisfied."

"Doubtless your highness would be so," replied Gaufridi; "but it is easier to wish than obtain one's wishes: however, this much I will promise, that nothing on our part shall be left untried to achieve your aggrandizement. We are powerful, and we

only ask, on your part, one sacrifice, if, indeed, it can be so called."

The prince shuddered, a dew like that of death bedewed his frame, his pulse beat languidly; he almost believed himself dying.

"Oh, Julio!" exclaimed he, "I cannot bear this; you have killed me."

The page smiled.

"It is your own weakness that thus unmans you. Rouse yourself; accept our terms, and you will never experience such sensations again."

"Alas!" replied the miserable victim of infernal temptation, "I would willingly accede to your terms, if I could silence the monitor within: tell me how I am to do *that*, and I will bind myself to you for ever."

"Well said, my prince," cried Gaufridi: "that was spoken like a man; become one of *us*, and you shall be no longer haunted with vain and idle fears. You experience in your present imperfect state the failings pertaining to your species, but when once you have dared to assert your freedom of will, those grovelling, slavish fears will be

subdued for ever. More at present I cannot, dare not say, but, with your good leave, I will conduct you where friends, with open arms, await you—where you shall subscribe to our conditions, and where every doubt as to the future shall be briefly solved.”

“Awful being!” exclaimed Charles, “do with me as you will; I am as it were a mere puppet in your hands.”

The page cast a glance of supreme contempt on his weak and guilty dupe; he even indulged in a long and loud fit of laughter. But this unseasonable mirth seemed particularly offensive to his companion, who asked him, in a petulant tone, what amused him so much.

“Nothing uncommon,” replied Julio, trying to restrain his mirth—“nothing at all uncommon, nothing that need offend your highness. I was only thinking that the *Devil* would have fewer disciples and followers if his fair daughter, *Pride*, had fewer charms.”

Greatly disconcerted, the prince eyed his extraordinary companion with astonishment,

he would have asked him to explain his strange speech and equally strange behaviour, but the page cast a withering glance on him, and uttering a short but emphatic sentence, hastily withdrew.

## PART III.

“ Grasp the boon that’s spread before ye,  
Monarch’s power, conqueror’s glory !”

At the time of the above conversation, the prince and his page were at St. Marco, on the shores of the Adriatic, but immediately after, they embarked in a small vessel, and sailing up the Gulf of Venice, landed at Chiozza. Without making any stay at that place, they hired mules, and set out for their destination—a lone tower on the banks of the Brenta Nuova, about a league from Padua.

The day was declining when they came in sight of the secluded building, and the

prince, in spite of every effort to the contrary, could not help feeling some strange sensations as he viewed the dark outline of the ruined and solitary tower; he managed, however, to conceal his perturbation from his companion, and alighted from his mule with some show of alacrity. Julio led the animals to a low shed, and then returned to conduct his victim into the interior of the tower.

The prince, fearful of exciting the contempt and ridicule of the monk, affected calmness, even to indifference; but his heart beat, and his legs trembled so much, that once or twice he found it difficult to proceed.

The pretended page, on entering the lower apartment of the tower, resumed his original form, and when the rays of the lamp, which was suspended from the ceiling, fell on his face, Charles shuddered to behold the transformation that had taken place.

“In my own peculiar sphere,” observed the monk, “I need wear no disguise. This

way, prince; be careful, or you will fall—the pavement is full of cracks and chasms: the lord of this solitary building is not very particular about such matters. We shall descend presently; but before we arrive at the head of the stairs you must consent to have your eyes bandaged: even *I* dare not conduct a visitor into the presence of Barman, without using that precaution.”

The prince shuddered involuntarily; an icy chill struck to his heart's core, but he had gone too far to retreat, and with the docility of a child suffered Gaufridi to bind up his eyes. The monk then took him by the hand, and led him forward. After walking some distance, Gaufridi bade him prepare to descend.

“Fear nothing,” said he, “I will sustain you.”

Again the miserable Charles shuddered: his brain was a chaos of horrid phantoms—his body was bathed in damp dews. In vain he sought for something to cheer and dissipate the agony of his mind—all within



was gloom and despair, remorse, and a too late repentance. In this feverish and irritable state of body and mind, he could hardly endure the pressure of the monk's fingers on his arm: he would have shook him off; but as he attempted to do so, Gaufridi resisted till his pressure produced real agony, and Charles groaned audibly.

"Are you weary of me?" said the monk, in a soft tone of voice, "or do you repent the step you have taken? If so, it is even not yet too late to return. I will reconduct you to the upper world: there is no harm done; you will still be only where and what you were before—the humble and insignificant Charles of Swabia, the lord of a few poor Bohemian watch-towers, and the pensionary of a kinsman who tolerates rather than loves you: witness the pains he is at to keep you at a distance from his court. But enough!—why should I thus force greatness on you? Come, let us return."

Charles, by this time, had recovered himself.

“ No,” said he, “ I will proceed! On the very threshold of fortune, and turn back! No, it shall never be said of the *insignificant Charles of Swabia*, that he had not courage to meet his fate. Lead on!”

“ First drink this cordial,” said Gaufridi: “ with all your bravado, I know you stand in need of it. No words—come, take the cup, and drink it to the dregs!”

Charles, hardly knowing what he did, took the chalice, and applying it to his parched lips, hastily quaffed it to the last drop. The liquid thus eagerly swallowed was exquisitely flavoured—at least while he was drinking it; but no sooner had it passed into his stomach, than it caused violent heats to pervade his whole frame, and strange and wild ideas to rush to his brain. No longer did he rest passive in the grasp of Gaufridi, but hastily drawing away his arm, he tore the bandage from his eyes, and rushed forward, heeding little the road he took.

The monk appeared by no means surprised at his violence, but quietly followed

him, and in the next moment both the prince and his betrayer found themselves in the immediate abode of the magician.

It was a vaulted cave of limited dimensions, hung round with black. A single but awfully brilliant torch cast a vivid light around, rendering every minute object visible. At the upper end of this funereal chamber stood a chair, under a canopy of black, and before the chair rose a small altar of black marble.

On entering this gloomy chamber, the prince suddenly halted. The wild frenzy that had so lately prompted his actions died away, and he became motionless, while his eyes were riveted on Gaufridi. The mysterious monk wore the habit of his order; his cowl, which on entering the cave was drawn over his face, was now thrown back, and his features had lost all that rosy hue which distinguished them in his character of Julio. Without noticing his companion, he bowed three times to the earth, and then, with a loud voice, called on Barman to come forth.

In a few minutes, a low rumbling noise, like the first announcement of a storm, was heard. A hissing sound followed, and then a sudden rush, as if the mighty waves of the ocean had burst their bounds: that rush proclaimed the actual presence of the sorcerer. Gaufridi fell prostrate on his face, but Charles remained erect, gazing with strained eyeballs on the misty vapour that rose from the altar. By slow degrees the smoke evaporated, and the prince beheld the form of the magician. A shudder ran through his whole frame as he contemplated the diminutive figure of the *illustrious Barman*.

The sorcerer was clad in a robe of sable serge, bound round his waist with a broad girdle, on which were traced hieroglyphic characters. On his breast he wore two badges, or seals, formed of pure white parchment, and on his head rose a towering cap of sable silk. In his right hand he carried a book, bound with shining clasps, and in his left a long white wand.

With a slow and measured step he

descended from the altar, and seating himself in the canopied chair, called upon the prostrate monk to arise. Gaufridi instantly obeyed the mandate, and standing erect, saluted the magician, by placing his spread hands on his forehead.

“What brings you here, Gaufridi? and who is your companion?” demanded Barman, in a loud voice.

“Prince of this dark region, I come a suppliant to the foot of thy throne, on the behalf of this young prince, who would have some questions answered as to his future destiny. He has long been a disciple of our school, and has within the last hour bound himself irrevocably to us, by drinking the *Elixir of Immortality*. Thou wilt find him a willing servant, and eager to obey thy behests. He is ambitious; but I need not trouble thee with particulars—thou wilt read *all* in thy unerring volume.

On hearing the monk assure the magician that he had drank *the elixir*, the prince hardly restrained himself from open reproaches; he cast a look of angry reproof on the monk, but it was only answered by

a contemptuous smile, and a sign to be silent. The prince knit his brows, heaved a profound sigh, but obeyed the mute signal, looking, at the same time, towards the magician. Barman was carefully perusing the volume he held in his hand, and appeared too absorbed to observe anything passing around him. At length, after reading some time, he closed the book, and fixing his penetrating eyes on Charles, exclaimed—

“I know all. Charles of Swabia is before me—that illustrious prince, whose destiny it has been our peculiar pleasure to contemplate. Noble stranger, we attend you. The mystic hour of one approaches anon, and *he*, whose servants we are, will be here.”

So saying, the magician descended from his seat, and advancing into the centre of the chamber drew a circle with his wand, and stepping into the magic ring, began the exorcism in an unknown tongue.

When he had finished this prefatory ceremony, strange and frightful howlings, shrieks, and yells, filled the cavern—forked tongues of fire played round his head ;

yet, notwithstanding these dreadful circumstances, he appeared unmoved, standing firm and undaunted. To have evinced fear and dismay, would have been to endanger his own safety. The howlings, after an interval, ceased, and an enormous serpent rolled slowly along, coiling and wreathing round the circle. From whence the reptile proceeded the prince could not imagine, as its appearance had been instantaneous. This frightful beast often erected his head, in which shone eyes, beaming like two radiant stars, and from whose enormous jaws darted forth a tongue gleaming like a dart of fire. Ever and anon he seemed about to wound the sorcerer, who skilfully eluded his attacks. At length, he motioned to Gaufridi, who instantly hastened to the altar, and raising the slab that covered it, took thence a brazen basin and a tripod lamp; into the former he threw several ingredients, and lighting the latter began to stir the contents of the basin. A few minutes a delightful perfume filled the cave; the serpent seemed fully sens-

of its powers; his wreathings gradually ceased, and he extended himself at full length, as if dead. The exorcist, seeing his charm had taken effect, stretched forth his wand, and touching the subdued reptile, cried, in a loud commanding voice—"Idas, arise!" Immediately the serpent, changing his form, rose up in the likeness of an old and wrinkled man, naked from the waist upwards, and carrying a small round mirror in his right hand.

"For what have I been summoned? What would you know?" inquired the infernal spirit, in a hoarse voice.

"Turn to your right, and behold one who would learn the secrets of his destiny," replied Barman; "one who has joined our association—*that Bohemian prince*, whose star you have so often contemplated with such complacency."

Idas grinned horribly, and uttering a yell of triumph, turned his mirror towards the prince.

Charles was all eyes and ears; so highly indeed was his fancy wrought, that he



hardly dared to breathe lest he might lose any of the passing scene. While he thus gazed, a light vapour like smoke passed slowly over the disk of the mirror, which gradually clearing away, gave to his enraptured view the vision of a lovely girl, fair as a spirit of light. On her white and polished brow rested a royal crown. While the prince gazed on this phenomenon, sweet music floated in the air, and a seraphic voice sang the following words—

“Whoever wins that royal maid,  
Shall gain a kingdom for her dower;  
Shall triumph o’er his prostrate race,  
And wield the sword of endless power.”

Fully persuaded that the prophetic lines referred to himself, Charles would have spoken, but Gaufridi checked him.

“Hist !” cried he, “observe, and be silent.”

A vapour again crept over the mirror, and shut the fair vision from his view; he had not much time to lament this circumstance, for again the vapour faded, and a less pleasing image than the former met his view.

The form of his hated cousin was promi-

ment in the picture, surrounded by the symbols of power; he seemed to wear a smile of insulting superiority, as he pointed to Prince Charles, disgraced and fettered.

“Ha!” cried the prince, starting—“is that to be my fate?”

“If unaided by us, certainly,” replied Idas; “but you must not interrupt me: command your feelings. I only show you what might be, if you were left to yourself:—with our powerful assistance, you will surmount every impediment, triumph over destiny, and be the arbiter of the fate of him you now envy—that is, if you devote yourself to us, soul and body. Once our own, we can circumvent your enemies; but while you withhold aught, there are powers and influences with whom we would not deign to contend: your cousin would then triumph, and you would be *nothing*—the abject slave of a haughty relative, the witness of felicity you could not share.”

“Enough!” cried Charles; “say no more. I consent; I will give the required pledge of my sincerity—while at your hands I shall expect the fruition of every wish I can

form. For no less will I barter my soul's eternal hope."

"Well said, princely brother!" cried the infernal spirit, uttering a loud laugh, which was echoed around by some fifty voices, much to the dismay of the guilty Charles, who could, however, see only Idas, Barmin, and his quondam page. When the laugh ceased, a dead—a horrid silence followed—which was at length broken by the evil spirit, who proceeded to inaugurate the prince. But it is not meet to dwell on this part of the tale; my readers may supply the omission as fancy dictates, and suppose the unhappy Charles the leagued associate of infernal and devilish spirits—the sworn foe of virtue, the sport of evil passions, the abandoned of God, and the enemy of man.

When the guilty rites were consummated, Idas again addressed the prince, holding towards him a sword of singular workmanship—

"Take this sword, forged by a potent power;  
Use it, great prince, at the appointed hour;  
Let neither pity, love, nor dread prevail,  
Nor fears prophetic your brave mind assail.

"Let nothing human tremble at your heart,  
For are you not of *the Dread Powers* a part?  
Then to the sport, without a thought of evil;  
Achieve the work, in spite of God or devil.

"When Schwartzwald's woods echo his dying groan,  
One step you're nearer to a kinsman's throne.  
Hail, potent prince! 'tis done—earth, air, and sky,  
Exulting, own your dread *supremacy*."

A long, loud, and demoniac yell answered this strain, till the very vault shook again with the discordant din. Charles shuddered; nevertheless he stretched forth his hand and took the weapon, and placing it in his belt, inquired with great humility when he was to use it.

Idas waved his hand.

"No more—

"For times and seasons, consult another:  
In Schwartzwald's wilds we have a brother—  
    To him repair;  
He oft has work'd our will  
By matchless skill,  
    And *shall* again.  
Adieu! your road pursue;  
And when again we meet,  
You'll have a *kingdom* prostrate at your feet."

No sooner had these words passed the fiend's lips than horrid sounds once more

filled the cave; cloven tongues of fire again darted around his head, and the most frightful yells proceeded from every quarter. Meantime, Idas slowly resumed his serpentine form, and after performing sundry frightful evolutions round the magic circle, finally vanished in a flame of fire. No sooner had the evil spirit disappeared than Barman prepared to quit his station, and after muttering some unintelligible words, carefully destroyed all traces of the circle, and then resumed his seat beneath the canopy.

Gaufridi drew near the prince, and said—

“ Our business here is finished, let us now seek the upper world.”

Charles, hardly knowing what he did, bent his head in token of submission, and was about to follow the monk, when the sorcerer waving his wand, uttered the following invocatory summons:—

“ Spirits of air,  
To Barman repair,  
His high behests obey;  
Bring from afar

Your swiftest car,  
And hence his friends convey.

" From Venice fair  
To Trieste bear  
The Swabian and his page ;  
Use no delay—  
Quick—quick—away !  
Or dread your master's rage.

" Gaufridi, you  
Shall thus pursue  
To Buda straight your way ;  
Your pupil there  
Shall see the fair  
Destined to own his sway.

" Her love secure ;  
Delay no more—  
Your triumph, prince, is near ;  
You have a hand,  
You have a brand—  
A heart unused to fear.

" Quail, Albert, quail !  
Your star grows pale ;  
Your guardian angel flies—  
Wild Schwartzwald's wood  
Shall drink your blood !  
The mighty Idas cries."

Overcome with conflicting emotions,  
Prince Charles heard no more. A deathly  
film covered his burning eyeballs; the mix-

ture he had drank began to take effect; a thousand frightful noises rang in his ears; he felt his strength fail; in vain he tried to rally and shake off the lassitude that every instant gained ground.

"In spite of the elixir, I die!" exclaimed he, pressing his burning hand on his scarcely beating heart; then calling feebly on Gaufridi, he sank motionless on the earth. What the monk did with him in this state, he never knew, for when he awoke from his deep trance, he found himself in a house of public entertainment at Trieste.

At first, only a very faint recollection of what had passed in the cave came across the prince's mind; it seemed more like a very fearful vision of the night than a reality. By degrees, however, he became painfully sensible that it was no dream—that he had really witnessed sights of terror, conversed with a spirit of darkness, and bound himself by a solemn compact to fulfil the dark behests of a minister of evil. When all this came in the full tide of awakened recollection to his mind, he suffered the

most excruciating mental torments; but the whisperings of pride and the soothing flatteries of his insidious companion soon dissipated his remorseful feelings, and ere he quitted Trieste, not a shade of sadness rested on his lofty brow.

About noon, the prince and the monk (who had again assumed his page's garb) bade adieu to Trieste, and set forward on their road to Buda. As his highness had no train, he preserved a strict incognito; but on his arrival at the capital he made himself known to their Hungarian majesties. His affinity to the Margrave of B—— procured him a ready welcome, and also an introduction to the youthful Beatrix, the affianced bride of his cousin.

This princess was hardly fifteen, but exquisitely lovely: in her the prince quickly recognised the original of the beautiful image presented to his view in Idas' mirror; and giving loose to the natural impetuosity of his temper, he fell madly in love with her, resolved at all events to possess a being so lovely, and one through whose



means he expected to be raised to the pinnacle of earthly grandeur.

Beatrice, on her part, was deeply struck with the elegant and imposing figure of the stranger. No longer did she admire the handsome but boyish features of her affianced lord, whose picture occupied a distinguished situation in her apartments. Froward and over-indulged, it was not long before she gave Prince Charles every reason to believe he was preferred to his kinsman, and under the pretence of conversing about one she already thought of with detestation, she often engaged him apart; and little cause had the prince to complain of the lady, or tax her with coyness and reserve. When the page was convinced that his pupil had made a favourable impression on the heart of the princess, he told him he must prepare to return to B——.

“You are now secure in this quarter,” said he; “matters of deep import call your attention elsewhere. The time approaches when you must try the metal of your sword. One triumph is not enough for him whose ambition knows no bounds.”

“True,” replied the prince, musing, while a deep sigh burst from his heart. “Doubtless you reason justly, but I fear to quit Buda so soon; I am hardly yet sure of the princess’s love. I would rather stay till I could be certain I had secured her heart—and risk everything for that toy!”

“Fie, prince!” exclaimed Gaufridi; “but rest satisfied: the princess *must* be faithful to you—she already loves you ardently. May the day never arrive when that same highly-coveted love shall prove rather a curse than a blessing to you!”

“What mean you?” cried the prince, angrily. “Is it possible that the love of such an angel should ever prove a curse to the man she honours with her heart?”

“Quite possible,” replied Gaufridi, gaily; “but we will not dispute about such a trivial point. Your highness must be on the road to B—— ere the sun rises to-morrow.”

“So soon! but I may take leave of the princess, and assure her of my constancy?”

“I will do that for you,” rejoined Gaufridi; “you could not acquit yourself as

you ought—you would act childishly; and your future consort must not see the weak side of your character. Go now, and seek a private interview with his majesty, and take your leave, while it shall be my business to reconcile the Lady Beatrix to your departure. So saying, the page quitted the chamber, and the prince had no choice but to obey his directions.

The king was rather surprised to hear Prince Charles announce his approaching departure, but he by no means expressed a wish for his remaining. He had seen with some little uneasiness his attention to the princess, and was therefore rather glad he was going away; he assured him, however, of his friendship, and hoped, at some future period, when the house of Hungary and that of B—— should be more closely united, to see his highness at Buda. In the meantime, he wished him health and a pleasant journey, requesting he would be the bearer of letters from him and the queen to the margrave and margravine. The prince made a suitable reply to his

majesty, and assured him it would give him infinite pleasure to be the bearer of any letters with which he might honour him, and then took his leave.

While the prince was closeted with the father, Julio was breaking the intended departure of her lover to the daughter, and puffing her up with vain and ridiculous expectations, which he well knew could never be realized. Though unwilling to lose sight of an adored object, the credulous Beatrix was obliged to agree with the page in the necessity of his immediate presence at B——.

"As I am not to see him before he goes," said the princess, sighs choking her utterance, "bear my fondest greetings to him; and as you say he goes to trust his future happiness to the generosity of a rival kinsman, may that kinsman be propitious. But should he be selfish enough to resist the prayers of my noble, most beloved Charles, he shall never have to boast he triumphed in his misery. Whether I be the bride of him I love or not, I will never ratify the con-

tract that at present binds me to Albert of B——. Say so to your lord. And now, good page, adieu; take this ring as the pledge of my friendship. May I see you soon again!"

So saying, and shedding abundance of tears, the wayward Beatrix sought her chamber, while the crafty monk, inwardly exulting in the near accomplishment of his dark and mercenary views, rejoined his dupe.

Full of the deadliest wishes and purposes, the fiend-inspired Charles, after an absence of nearly a twelvemonth, returned to his uncle's court, and there met with a reception he little merited.

Albert, in particular, evinced the greatest pleasure in welcoming him once more to B——; but had he known the secret intentions of his hollow-hearted kinsman, he would have shrunk with horror from his professions of affection and friendship, and turned with loathing from that hand, already armed against his life.

Prince Charles, though so much pre-

judiced against his cousin, could not shut his eyes to the evident improvement one short year had made in his appearance. The awkwardness of boyhood had given place to the assured but modest dignity of early manhood, and highly as he thought of his own attractions, he could not help allowing (even while his soul sickened at the conviction) that Albert fell not a whit short of him, either in beauty of person, or in those mental attainments then rarely possessed but by the sons of the church. It is astonishing that a man of Prince Charles's character should feel or suffer the encroachment of such a petty vice as that of vanity: one that aimed at sovereign power to sigh over the personal attractions of a rival, like a silly girl; but so it was, and when alone, he often indulged in the weakness of tears, as the personal beauty of his cousin came in full tide to his recollection.

"Would I could wither that graceful form!" he would exclaim—"would I could deform that open brow! Shall my Beatrix see him?—shall she have an opportunity of

comparing us together? Never! I know the sex's folly—their fickleness. What if she were to prefer his airy, springing form, to this herculean one—that sunny open face to —damnation!—I cannot pursue the theme. Soon he will be as nothing, rankling in the grave—festering in corruption—while I—ah! I shall be alive!—well, happy, great—envied! Yes, they said so, and can I doubt?

It was Gaufridi's advice to the prince conceal from his uncle his late visit Buda, and to destroy the letters intrusted to his care. Charles approved the advice—and followed it implicitly.

"It spared him," he said, "the pain listening and replying to questions that would doubtless all refer to the projected alliance between his adored mistress and the hated Albert."

When the prince had been returned about a fortnight, Julio told him he must quit him for a few days.

"When I return," said he, "you shall know exactly how you are to proceed in the affair that you have so much at heart. We

have a friend in Schwartzwald whose advice and assistance will be of great service to us. Adieu! while I am absent, keep a strict guard over your actions, and by no means betray the latent feelings of your soul."

The interval of Julio's absence was passed by Charles in all the horrors of the most exquisite suspense. A thousand fears agitated his guilty and ambitious mind. Scarcely could he endure society, particularly that of those he meant to injure, and to whom, in consequence of Julio's injunctions, he was obliged to appear affectionate and assiduous. Often did he call on Gaufridi to return and end his sufferings. At length Gaufridi came. At the still hour of midnight, on the third night after his departure he stood suddenly before his dupe. Charles started, for he could not see by what means he had entered, as the doors all remained closed; but in the next moment he pressed his welcome visitor to his breast, and assured him that he had only come just in time to save him from despair.



“ I doubt it not,” replied the monk ; “ but cheer up now—I have good tidings for you.”

“ Name them ! name them !” exclaimed Charles, vehemently.

“ I will, if you give me time,” pursued the page, disengaging himself from the prince’s embrace. “ Sit down, and listen to me.

“ Marbas agrees with Idas in assuring you a brilliant destiny. Your cousin’s clouded hour approaches ; you must take advantage of it. This is the fifth of October : seven days from this, two hours before midnight, you must be alone with him in the heart of Schwartzwald, but he must not see you ; you must follow him closely, and when you arrive at the spot I once pointed out to you, be ready to strike, and provided he calls not on *that name* I care not to mention, you will prevail.”

“ But how am I to get him to enter Schwartzwald at that late hour, and alone ?” inquired the prince, in a querulous tone. “ You know the margrave will not even suffer him to quit the palace gardens ; how,

then, do you expect he will let him go so far? Your colleague might as well have refused your request altogether, as have made such a senseless proposal. If he be safe, save in the heart of Schwartzwald, he is safe altogether, for there is no chance of his entering that wild region while he has such a vigilant guardian in his superstitious, star-gazing father."

"If you have done, prince," said Gaufridi, coldly, "I will speak. I say he shall enter Schwartzwald, and at the very hour most favourable for your views. If he quit it again alive, that is your fault. Listen to me. *Fate* and *we* have decreed that Prince Albert's life shall be exposed to imminent peril on the eve of the thirteenth of October. We have also so disposed matters, that with all his fears the margrave, at the solicitations of his consort, shall permit his son, in your company to pursue the pleasures of the chase in the forest of Hermanstadt, on the confines of Schwartzwald. When in the immediate neighbourhood of the region so pregnant with danger to him, it will be no

difficult task to lure the young prince thither. Any device with one so inexperienced will succeed; for instance, Marbas proposes that you shall draw him from the rest of the company to a retired spot and then quit him, while he, using some mystery, shall appear, and intimate that your highness, beset by banditti, is in danger of losing your life in Schwartzwald, if not rescued by some friendly hand. Albert, you must allow, has a noble, generous heart: he will (though bound by a promise to the contrary) flee on the wings of affection to rescue *you*, Prince Charles, from a feigned danger. It will then be your part to pursue him, on a steed prepared by Marbas, and though the early part of the night will be dark, a light of our procuring shall point out your victim. Strike home, in the name of your master, and the day will be our own. Albert out of the way, you will be once more heir to the margraviate. While he lives it would be no use to drug your uncle's cup; when he is gone, a well-mixed potion, or a keen steel may then be administered

with success, and ere another moon hath filled her horns, your highness will doubtless be——”

“Margrave of B——!” said a voice in a distant part of the chamber.

Charles started in great alarm, and looked with starting eyeballs towards the spot from whence the voice proceeded. Julio smiled.

“That is a fortunate omen for your success; that voice rarely sounds for nothing,” said he. “Take courage, prince; I must leave you now. Reflect on what I have said, and arm yourself with resolution, for believe me, you will need all you possess to bear you through nobly.”

So saying, with a wave of his hand, the page retired, leaving his guilty dupe by no means in an enviable state of mind.

After a night of broken and feverish slumber, Prince Charles arose in the morning, fully determined to put the machine in motion that was to realize his ambitious projects, and raise him to that elevated station which, from his earliest years, he had

aspired to fill. He first sought his cousin, and after the greetings of the morning were over, ventured to propose a visit to Hermanstadt. Albert looked embarrassed.

"Cousin," said he, colouring deeply, "you know I cannot quit this palace without the express permission of my lord and father. Wherefore would you visit Hermanstadt, or why ask me to bear you company? You are free to go wherever you list. Alas! you know too well I cannot. Say no more to me of going hither or thither; my heart is sad."

"Cheer up, cousin; I did not mean to vex you," replied the perfidious Charles, kindly pressing his hand. "You love the chase; I was meditating to solicit the margrave to allow us and a chosen company to repair to Hermanstadt, to enjoy that recreation. The woods around the palace abound with choice boars; he surely could not deny my request; but perhaps it would be as well to get the margravine on our side. I know my uncle can deny her nothing."

"You may try," replied Albert, sighing.

“ I confess I should of all things like to go, but I fear my father will never listen to such a proposal. He, unhappily, entertains too many fears on my account to afford me even a reasonable share of freedom. Oh, Charles, what a happy, enviable being you are, free to go wherever fancy prompts! Willingly would I exchange situations with you, or even with the meanest clown, to enjoy such a privilege.”

A mysterious expression passed over the face of Charles as Albert uttered these words.

“ Ah!” replied he, “ do not envy me; every one has his own cares—I have mine. Too great a portion of freedom may prove as great a curse as too little—but enough of this. I will seek the margravine, and engage her in our interest; be ready to second my entreaties, if necessary. Adieu! await me here; successful or otherwise, I will quickly return.”

The early part of this story has already apprized the reader that Prince Charles was successful in his intrigues, and, though most

unwillingly, procured his uncle's consent to the hunting scheme. The result of that unfortunate expedition has been already seen. Aided partly by chance, partly by design, Charles contrived to detach his kinsman from the rest of the party, and when he pushed before him, to deal a death-blow to the wearied object of pursuit, an accident removed him and his prey suddenly and effectually from his cousin's sight. Excited by the desire felt by all keen sportsmen to be the first to inflict the mortal wound, Charles for one moment forgot the real object which had prompted him to pass his kinsman, and eagerly bending forward to dart his spear with a surer aim, he observed not that he was on the brink of a precipice, and ere he could recover himself or check his horse, he was precipitated down the declivity, together with the animal he pursued. The prince, however, sustained little injury, having his fall much broken by the brushwood amid which he fell. His horse, however, was seriously injured, and appeared quite unable to rise, while the

unfortunate boar, spent with fatigue and loss of blood, lay motionless at his feet. In this situation he was found by Marbas, but not so soon as he expected, for the unusual darkness of the evening and his own impatience had led him to imagine it much later than it really was. Marbas had the precaution to bring a fresh steed for the prince's use, and one so like his own that it would have been quite impossible to have distinguished between them.

"It was lucky I brought this animal," said Marbas, bending with the light he carried over the prostrate horse. "I certainly did not altogether foresee this accident, but I was certain your horse would never be able (after his fatigues of the day,) to use the speed necessary for accomplishing your purpose. This animal will never rise again; his injuries are very severe; I will expedite his departure, and transfer his trappings to his successor. Come, prince, assist me."

Charles obeyed, but it was not without some regret he saw his cold-blooded companion plunge a poniard into the breast of



his suffering steed, or hear without pity the groan that marked his exit from life.

“He will be a choice morsel for the crow and vulture; he is in excellent condition,” observed the fiend, with a sneer; “and this fat boar will make a dainty addition to the repast: their bones will whiten together in the solitariness of this desert region, except, indeed, that your highness, when margrave, may appoint them a more honourable sepulture.”

There was a tone of derision in this speech highly offensive to Prince Charles, and he was about to express his displeasure when his companion said—

“When you showed yourself such an excellent voltiguer, does your highness condescend to remember how your illustrious relative was situated? It moves my wonder that he did not make one of the party, as he is so fond of following your highness’ steps.”

“I am not in a jesting mood,” replied Charles, sullenly, “and I must beg you will change your tone; it smacks too much of contempt and familiarity to be agreeable to me.”

"I will be as grave as you could desire," replied Marbas, with a tone of pretended contrition, "and as polite as my rude nature will permit. Condescend to give me the information I require. Where may your highness' cousin, Prince Albert of B——, be at this moment?"

"In heaven or hell, for aught I know to the contrary. If you are endowed with the faculties you pretend, why need you put that question to me?" roared the prince, stamping as he spoke. "Press me not too far; as I told you just now, I am not in a temper to be trifled with."

"Well, well," replied Marbas, "I will not trifle with you. But do not speak so loud. For the third time, where is Prince Albert?"

"Where I left him," replied Charles, doggedly; "at least so I presume. Ascend that cursed cliff, and see if you can find him above. I suppose my misadventure will disconcert all our well-laid plans. Perdition seize the boar! I wish he had been a thousand miles off, ere I had attempted to spear him."

“ Be not angry with the poor beast,” said Marbas, “ he is in no way to blame; and, indeed, as far as I can see, no great harm is done as yet. I will ascend the rock, and seek new game for you; if you succeed in striking a *white hart* you need not regret missing a black boar.”

“ But listen to me, ere you go,” said Charles, rather hesitatingly. “ What if the business were done at once? What signifies who deals the blow? If you find him, why not dispatch him incontinently; he will be entirely in your power.”

“ By no means,” said Marbas. “ Do you forget what you heard in the tower on the banks of the Brenta? Albert’s life can be assailed with success but by *one*, and that one is yourself. Such is the decree written in the book of his destiny. Were his blood to flow this night by any other hand, it were a needless sacrifice, and would profit you nothing: it would accomplish his destiny, but not your own. Prepare, therefore, to use the sword confided to your care, in the manner prescribed, and may success attend

you! Wait here till I seek and find your cousin; the hour is yet distant that must decide his doom."

So saying the fiend retired, and what passed between him and my hero has been already related. There is a name at which every knee should bow; there is a name at which devils tremble; and to the uttering of that name Albert owed his safety. So had the arch-sorcerer predicted, and so it really chanced; for no sooner had Prince Charles heard his cousin's exclamation than a fearful panic seized his guilty heart, and uttering a bitter curse of mingled rage and disappointment, turned his horse's head, and regained the palace of Hermanstadt in an incredibly short interval.

All there, by this time, was consternation and despair. The return of the hunters, without Prince Albert, had thrown the margrave (who had arrived in the course of the evening) into a paroxysm of inexpressible agony, and the nobles were hurrying about, neither knowing what to do nor what to advise.

With hasty steps, and unobserved, (for who had leisure for idle observation?) Charles was crossing the last court-yard, when he was met by Julio, who started back on beholding him.

"You have been unsuccessful. It is hardly midnight, and you are here!"

"May all the devils and arch-devils that ever inhabited pandemonium blast you and yours!" cried the disappointed and infuriated prince, in a transport of irrepressible rage. "I followed your senseless injunctions to the letter, and for what?—for nothing, worse than nothing. According to your own assertions, all chance is now over; *he* lives the usual life of man—neither steel, spell, nor charm can touch him."

"Hush! prince," whispered Gaufridi, drawing him hastily towards his own chamber. "You have been supposed an inhabitant of this chamber for hours. I took care of that; I blinded all eyes, and deceived all ears. Come, come, moderate your rage. Though Prince Albert lives, you shall be

great and happy—happy, through the means of your beautiful mistress. And what will you say, when I tell you it is permitted you to imbitter his life, and exalt yourself by snatching from his grasp his affianced bride?”

“Tis false!” exclaimed the prince. “I will believe no more—no more shall you impose on me. You have deceived me in a point of vital import: never, never more will I trust you or your vile associates. Avaunt, miscreant! let me pass!”

“Softly, softly!” replied the monk, placing himself before the prince; “remember the *cave* at Padua, and all you saw and heard there. Remember also, the elixir, and your oath: you cannot quit us, if you would. *We hold your pledge!*”

At these words a cold tremour ran through the prince's frame; his rage, erst so violent, suddenly quelled, and casting a hopeless glance around, followed, without more resistance, the guiding footsteps of Gaufridi, who, without previous warning or explanation, led his victim into the im-

mediate presence of the agonized margrave, saying softly as he did so—

“Exult in the scene before you; behold the work of your own hand! I have brought you here, because it is right you should be seen paying your duty and offering your condolence to your unhappy kinsman. Approach, and offer him those expressions of regret and sorrow usual on such occasions.”

Charles trembled, his whole soul was in a tumult; he could not obey Julio's advice, but remained like one rooted to the spot on which he stood. All the injuries he had done and still meditated against the father and the son rushed in full tide on his too faithful memory. His crimes, as if wearing tangible forms, stood in black array before him.

“Curse ye all!” cried he, starting, as if to avoid their approach. “Come not near me—touch me not! Ambition, pride—by you and your seductions have I been undone!”

Then hastily turning away, he fled to the seclusion of his own chamber. Remorse, for a time, usurped every faculty of his mind, and while the fit lasted he would

have given empires, had he possessed them, to recall the past—to have been released from the control of his guilty associate. But that associate, reading every passing thought of his mind, quickly diverted him from such dangerous reflections, and by artful insinuations and pretended pity soon brought him to the temperament best suited to his purpose. But the constitution of the miserable Charles was not proof against such violent and conflicting emotions; and, before many hours had elapsed, he was raging in all the wildness of a burning fever. Gaufridi would suffer no one to approach him while he continued in this situation; indeed, the general affliction was such, that he was nearly forgotten, and it was by no means his page's intention that he should be better remembered. His wild ravings were not meet for vulgar ears; and thus he continued under the monk's control till his mind had recovered its usual tone.

In the meantime the happy tidings of Albert's safety reached Hermanstadt, and the transported margrave set out for



Romana. On his way thither, he was informed of his nephew's illness, which no one had ventured to mention before. At any other time the kindly heart of Herman would have been smitten with affliction at such information, but now every faculty of his mind was absorbed by a nearer and far dearer interest: he gave strict orders, however, that the prince should be carefully attended, proposing, when he arrived at Romana, to send his own physician to visit the invalid.

Having brought the retrospect thus far, it is high time to return to the chamber of Prince Albert, which, when I began this digression, had just been entered by Doctor di Florenzo. With noiseless footfalls the sage advanced, and when near enough to the baron to be heard without speaking above his breath, he inquired if the prince had shown any signs of returning animation. Romana assured him he was better, and had been enjoying for some time a calm slumber.

"That is well," replied the astrologer,

"but he must be strictly watched; this is  
 a critical juncture with him. I cannot ac-  
 count for his being in Schwartzwald at a  
 time so pregnant with danger, in the very  
 heart of that region I warned him to shun.  
 Only five days have elapsed since I con-  
 sulted the stars in his behalf, and found  
 that his life would be shortly in peril, and  
 menaced by a secret foe. If the margrave  
 did not mean to profit by my skill, why did  
 he bid me exert it? Can you inform me,  
 my lord, how it chanced that the prince  
 was found wounded in the forest, when he  
 should have been safe in his own chamber?"

"Indeed, Florenzo, I cannot," replied  
 the baron; "it was my happy lot to rescue  
 him from peril, but what led him into that  
 peril I know not."

"Well, I must say it is most astonish-  
 ing," rejoined the astrologer, musing:  
 "Prince Albert wounded in Schwartzwald,  
 and found there by my Lord Romana!  
 May I ask what prompted you to seek him?  
 How came your lordship, at such a late  
 hour, in the forest?"

“Consult the stars, my good Eugenio,” replied the baron, archly smiling; “surely, nothing can be hid from such an adept as yourself. I would not so greatly insult your sagacity as to enter into a vulgar detail of circumstances of the how and the when of the matter—but hist! the prince moves. Had you not better administer the potion I see in your hand?—doubtless, he would be all the better for it.”

The doctor, though somewhat displeased with the manner in which the baron evaded his interrogatories, advanced to the bedside and presented the nostrum, which the prince swallowed in silence; he then felt the patient's pulse, and finding him free from fever, took his leave, after enjoining the baron to keep the room quiet, and promising to repeat his visit very shortly.

No sooner had the sage withdrawn than Albert, as briefly as possible, informed the baron that his father was at Hermanstadt, and conjured him to lose no time in apprizing his beloved parent of his safety.

“And pray, baron,” pursued the prince,

“let me know as soon as possible whether my cousin, Prince Charles, escaped from the ruffians who beset him so furiously.”

For a moment the baron gazed anxiously at the prince; he feared his mind wandered, as this was the first mention he had made of his kinsman's danger. Not wishing, however, to agitate him by the useless discussion of a subject on which he could say nothing, the baron promised that every inquiry should be made.

“I will instantly dispatch a courier to Hermanstadt,” said he; “and that there may be no mistake, I will give the order in person. Let me entreat you to compose yourself, and, above all things, do not talk. Fabian, who supplies my place while I am absent, has strict orders to be mute; therefore let me beg your highness not to question him, as he is absolutely ignorant on all the subjects most interesting to you. Florenzo assured me your life almost depends on your being kept quiet and composed. You used to honour Romana so far as to comply with his requests: may he entreat

your highness, at this momentous crisis, to be as docile as heretofore? The happiness of a fond father and the welfare of a whole nation depend on your prudence."

"Say no more, my best friend," cried the prince; "I will obey your slightest wish. Yet God knows I have much, very much to tell you—much on which I would consult you. I am particularly uneasy about Charles. Oh, Romana!" cried he, stretching forth his hand to the baron as he spoke—"my unhappy Charles is no more! I am sure of it."

"Is this the composure—the obedience to my wishes—you just now promised?" said Romana, gravely, and sighing deeply as he spoke. "Hope the best for your cousin. No report of his death, or even of his having been in danger, has as yet reached us. I will go, however, and ascertain if possible on what grounds your fears rest. In the meantime, endeavour to sleep; and when I return, I trust it will be in my power to give you such information respecting Prince Charles as shall allay all your fears on his account."

Albert shook his head, as much as to say, "You mean to amuse me with hope, when I fear there is none;" while the baron retired, hardly knowing what to think, and not a little curious to have the many strange events of the past night explained, though he imagined they could not be fully elucidated till the prince was well enough to speak on the subject himself. Albert, in the meantime, watched eagerly for the baron's return; but his absence was so long protracted, that the prince, in spite of every effort he made to the contrary, fell fast asleep; and when his host returned, he found him enjoying a profound and salutary repose.

The prince slept so long that the marriage had received the transporting news of his safety, and was already on his road to Romana ere he awoke. It is impossible to do justice to the father's feelings, on being assured of the existence of his idolized son. At first he would not credit the intelligence; in fact, Count Saarsden had to pledge his honour to the truth of the assurance, ere he could admit his mind to

credit it even for a single moment. His joy then proved nearly as overpowering as his grief; and it was necessary for those about him to use extraordinary exertions to keep him from relapsing into the inert state from which he had been but just aroused. At length he became rationally calm, and without delay set out for Romana; when arrived, he hardly gave the baron time to welcome him to his castle, so impatient was he to behold and embrace his son.

The prince had been about an hour awake, when the trembling hand of paternal fondness undrew his curtains, when the eyes of doting affection rested on his pale face.

“My boy! my Albert!” exclaimed the margrave, sinking on his knees, beside the bed.

“Thou art alive, then! I was not (praised be God!) deluded with false hopes.”

“Honoured sire,” replied the prince, clasping his father’s hand, and pressing it reverently to his lips, “I am, indeed, alive! and, with the permission of Heaven, will

live to repay all your love with grateful service."

"Grant it, Father of mercies!" cried the margrave, straining the prince to his heart.

"Oh, this is a joyful hour! Lord, make me sensible of thy mercy!"

Albert was affected, even to tears, at his father's words and manner, and Romana, who was present, found it necessary to interfere.

"This must not be, sire; you agitate the prince. Eugenio enjoined strict quiet. You see he is doing well. Let me lead your highness hence."

The margrave arose, and walked a few steps from the bed, then suddenly pausing, he abruptly inquired what was the day of the month.

"The thirteenth," replied the baron.

"Ha!" exclaimed the margrave, starting back, and changing colour. "What say you?—the *thirteenth* of October?"

A deep groan burst from his lips, and covering his eyes with his hands, he remained silent for several minutes. At



length removing his hands, he looked distractedly at Albert.

"And is that fatal day at length arrived? Oh, Eugenio! why did I disregard your injunction? What a besotted fool have I been! Never till this moment did I remember that the period so dangerous to my child was at hand. If a revolution in the planetary system does not take place ere that glass is run," pointing, as he spoke, to an hour-glass which stood on the table—"at *One*, he dies!"

"Oh, my liege, believe it not!" cried the baron, drawing the margrave as far as possible from the prince's bed; "turn your eyes on the prince. Has death, think you, set his impress on that brow? Let me beseech your highness to dismiss such idle fears from your mind. Trust in God's mercy, and not in the wild and speculative theories of brain-sick visionaries. The prince is doing as well as possible. It is nearly half-past twelve. Do you think it probable he will end his mortal career ere that glass is run?"

The margrave's only reply was a deep sigh, or rather groan. For a moment he stood buried in profound thought; in the next, he strode hastily away, saying, as he repulsed Romana, who was following him—"I go to Florenzo."

It was now the baron's turn to sigh, and returning to the prince's chamber, seated himself at the bedside, to ponder in his own mind on the late strange events, and regret anew the margrave's prepossession in favour of the science he condemned. Happily, Albert had heard only a few disjointed words of the foregoing conversation, but he could not help observing his father's extreme agitation, which he attributed to a very different cause from the real one.

"My father left the room in evident distress," said the prince to Romana, "and my cousin is the cause. You promised to bring me tidings of him: he cannot be well, or he would be here. Beside, the few words I heard my father utter must have had reference to Charles. I think I heard him say he was no more."

“ Indeed, my dearest prince, you needlessly alarm yourself,” replied Romana; “ your ears deceived you. The margrave made no allusion to Prince Charles, in his late conversation. I am sorry to say the prince is indisposed, but not seriously. I have made every possible inquiry, but no body seems to know anything of his having been in any danger. He returned last night to Hermanstadt, and was seen by many of your uncle’s attendants in his chamber. Count Saarsden saw your cousin’s page, Julio, this morning, who told him the prince had a feverish cold, but that it was nothing. I make no doubt he will be here in a day or two.”

“ You amaze me,” replied Albert. “ I shall indeed fancy I was bewitched. Some fiend was surely busy with us. I would that you would permit me to relate my strange rencontre in the forest; you would then, I think, agree with me, that I was under the dominion of some spell.”

“ You must get well,” observed the baron, closing the curtain, “ ere you let me

into your confidence. You know on some subjects I am a little sceptical, and if your case is not a very clear one, I do not think you will make me a convert."

"I was once as great a sceptic as yourself," replied the prince, "but I think my opinions waver now. I trust in God I shall soon be able to enter on the subject, and when you hear my story, I hope you will give me a candid and unbiassed opinion on what appears to me mysterious, and even passing the laws of nature. I would now pray you to have my kindest greetings borne to Charles. Tell him, dearest friend——"

"Everything," interposed Romana; "and now pray compose yourself—not a word more, as you love me."

The prince pressed the baron's hand, and promised to obey him, internally feeling the necessity of rest, as his wound, and the loss of blood consequent on it, had greatly reduced his strength; and his late interview with his father had excited and agitated him in no small degree.

## PART IV.

" 'Tis but a passing sight,  
Yet serves to cheat his weary night."

ON quitting his son's chamber, the margrave bent his steps to the north tower, within whose solitary precinct Florenzo was generally to be found. Contrary to custom, however, the doctor was not in his chamber. Mad with impatience, the margrave rushed up the winding stairs, which led to an upper apartment, and there beheld the venerable astrologer busily engaged with a celestial globe and a ponderous tome, over which he bent in deep thought.

" Sage Eugenio!" exclaimed the mar-

grave—"say, is my son dying? This is the thirteenth of October, and you may remember you bade me beware of that day; and yet so lately as five days ago, when you warned me against permitting the prince to join the chase, you never even alluded to the approach of that dangerous period. Was that well done?"

"On one subject, I never give but one opinion; I deem that sufficient," replied the astrologer, gravely. "Your late question, if you remember, had nothing to do with times or seasons. You merely inquired if the prince might safely hunt in the neighbourhood of Schwartzwald. I told you, *No*. Yet you suffered him. Would you have restrained him, had I reminded you of the nearness of the fateful *thirteenth*?"

"Most surely," replied the margrave. "It was remiss of you in the extreme not to mention the near approach of that period."

"Permit me to tell your highness," returned the doctor, in his usual calm tone, "that the influence which was powerful

enough to induce you to overlook my v  
ing would also have been equally irresis  
had I indeed reverted to my former pr  
tion—a thing, by the way, as I said be  
I never do. But enough of this; the  
ger is now past. Three quarters o  
hour and fifty seconds ago, a superior  
benignant planet became lord of the asc  
ant; and notwithstanding your blame  
negligence, the life of the prince is no lo  
menaced. I would, however, have  
highness keep a strict watch over him.  
cloud still lowers over his head, and whe  
it will burst in kindly showers or overwh  
ing tempest, it would be presumptuous  
premature in me to determine. All I  
is, hasten his nuptials with his affia  
bride. At this very moment he is th  
ened with or actually experiences a po  
ful prepossession, which will, or  
militate against the Princess Beatrix.  
soon as he can be moved, take him he  
place him in security, and, above all, let  
not enter this region again. Fate is  
with him here.”

"Alas!" exclaimed the margrave, smiting his forehead as he spoke, "you conjure up a host of new fears. Was there ever a man so situated?—a father so miserable?"

"Many," replied the astrologer—"many worse off than your highness. Keep the advice I have given you a profound secret; act upon it as soon as you can, and I trust you will soon change your present opinion. Return now to the chamber of your son. Compose yourself, and should you wish to question me further, I shall be prepared to answer you at midnight—at present I am deeply engaged."

Thus unceremoniously dismissed by the learned adept, the margrave slowly retired, resolving to put the advice he had just received into practice as soon as circumstances would permit, and by no means suffer himself, on any future occasion, to deviate one iota from the doctor's advice. In this frame of mind he entered his son's chamber, and had the extreme happiness to find him calm, and taking some refreshment from the hand of Romana. The margrave could not,



however, be certain that even his eyes were not deceiving him till he had examined the hour-glass, and finding it had been turned, he was convinced that present danger had indeed passed away. With hasty steps and a radiant countenance he approached the couch, and once more embraced his son. Albert, as before, was much affected at the excess of sensibility evinced by his father. He well knew what he must have endured during the interval, short as it was, in which his fate remained undecided.

“ Oh, my father !” said he, pressing the margrave’s hand, “ I wish I might explain myself; you would then see that I entered Schwartzwald not in violation of my promise, but under what I now believe a gross delusion.”

“ I do not like always to interrupt your highness,” said the baron, “ but you are not yet able to enter into any discussions or explanations. If I might offer advice, I would recommend the margrave to retire to his own chamber, and seek that repose he so much requires. A few days of quiet will

render your highness capable of making those disclosures you allude to. In the meantime, I am certain your illustrious father will derive more real satisfaction in witnessing your progress towards health than he could in having his curiosity gratified, however highly it may be excited."

The margrave assured the baron he had exactly expressed his sentiments, and being quite ready to retire, requested his host to marshal the way; and after taking a tender leave of his son, and recommending him to the protection of his patron saint, preceded by Romana, retired to his dormitory, at the door of which I shall leave him. Whether his highness went to bed, or sought another interview with di Florenzo, the original manuscript does not mention; so I cannot satisfy the curiosity of my readers on such a momentous and interesting subject.

Blessed with a sound, unbroken constitution, the prince rapidly recovered; and a week had hardly elapsed after his strange adventure in the Black Forest, when he was able to quit his bed, and shortly after, he

entered on the explanation his father longed yet dreaded to hear. It is not necessary to recapitulate the conversation, which, on the prince's part, was as guarded as possible. Romana, who was present, could not help admiring the dexterity with which he passed over the accident that had introduced him to the inhabitants of the caverns. It is true, a person in the secret, as the baron was, might have observed a slight tremour of the voice, a deeper shade on the cheek, at this period of the relation, but the margrave, uninstructed in the matter, saw nothing to excite suspicion in his son's manner ; indeed, he was too deeply absorbed in reflecting on the danger he had been exposed to, to bestow much thought on anything of minor importance, and when the prince ended his recital, many minutes elapsed ere he spoke.

“ Most mysterious, indeed !” exclaimed the margrave, at length breaking silence, “ Oh, my child, to what danger did my weak compliance with what I knew was wrong expose you ! Doubtless, that voice

which addressed you proceeded from the enemy spoken of by di Florenzo, or else an agent of that enemy, be he who he may. I shall never cease to regret having listened to those who hold that learned man and his science in light esteem. But, thank God, my boy, you are safe," continued the marriage, pressing his son's hand: "all I can say is, you shall never, with my consent, be so exposed again. Come, do not look so grave; let us forget the past, and look forward to the future with hope."

But, for the prince, the future contained nothing cheering: his father's words plainly implied an increased degree of caution, and he could not help accusing his over-anxious parent of weakness, in thus permitting his actions to be ruled by an old pedant who had outlived the finer feelings of his nature, and cared little how much he circumscribed that liberty in another which he could no longer enjoy himself. His heart sickened, as his fancy rapidly sketched one gloomy picture after another, and some time elapsed ere he could rally his spirits sufficiently to

speak on other subjects. The margravine's hasty journey, Prince Charles' illness and other circumstances of minor interest were next discussed. In speaking of his cousin, Albert could not help expressing surprise that, as he was said to be better, he had not as yet come to see him. The margrave told him that the prince, though better, was still very weak; indeed, he feared his illness had been more severe than Julio would acknowledge, as Count Saarsden, who had seen him a day or two before, gave a melancholy account of his appearance. Albert again deeply lamented the circumstance, more particularly as his own indisposition entirely precluded the possibility of his going to Hermanstadt, for some time, at least.

“Oh,” said the margrave, in a cheering tone, “do not let that circumstance make you uneasy; as soon as you are able to travel, we shall visit the castle, in our way to B——, and I think, from your present appearance, I may safely predict that a few days will enable you to travel with safety.

The Baron Romana, beside anxiety on Prince Albert's account, suffered great perplexity respecting the mysterious inhabitants of the cave. What to do with them he knew not, for since the accidental intrusion of my hero, he no longer looked upon their present residence as a safe one—not that he apprehended any danger from him, though he was certain his mind retained a vivid recollection of his romantic adventure; but, if chance had conducted him thither, a similar accident might conduct less unexceptionable visitors there also, particularly as the breach through which Prince Albert descended still remained open, and he dared not direct attention towards the spot, by having it closed up. In this dilemma, and after mature deliberation, he at length came to the determination of removing the females to the untenanted and solitary western lower, which communicated with the caverns by a secret passage known only to himself—indeed, it was by this passage he always visited the subterraneans; and as no time was to be lost in putting his plan in

execution, he repaired at midnight to the caves, and from their gloomy precinct, for the first time, conducted their youthful inmate, who, with all the inexperience and restlessness of youth, rejoiced in her change of abode, although, in truth, that change was hardly for the better, as the apartments of the western tower were almost as gloomy as the caverns, and within whose precincts it would be impossible to enjoy many of the comforts and indulgences which the subterranean situation of her late abode allowed.

When Romana had established the females in their new abode, supplied them with as many comforts as he could secretly convey thither, and given them strict injunctions not to appear on the battlements in daylight, he retired, and wishing to have a little conversation with the astrologer, proceeded to his quarter of the castle.

Di Florenzo was seated at a table, reading, (his almost constant occupation.) Aroused by the opening of the door, he arose, thinking it was the margrave, and laying down his book, advanced a few steps

towards his visitor; when he perceived it was Romana, he paused, and said—

“I thought it was the margrave.”

“The margrave, indeed!” cried Romana, petulantly; “I wish he had never seen you.”

“And why that wish, prithee, my good lord? What have I done to give rise to it, in one of thy mild temper?”

“I will be plain with you, Signor di Florenzo,” returned the baron. “I do not approve of the science in which you so much delight; but this is not the first time I have told you so. Your cursed juggling has completely turned your patron’s brain: had you seen him just now, even you, callous as you are, would have pitied him.”

“Why call me callous?—because I am cool and composed?” inquired Eugenio. “Besides, I am sure you will do me the justice to say, I never obtruded my knowledge on his highness, nor can you accuse me of using unjustifiable arts or conjurations. The stars are my mirrors: in them



I read the fate of men. You must be aware that I have made many valuable discoveries; future ages will profit by my industry and bless my memory."

"Very likely," observed the baron, drily. "But to the point: give me leave to ask the extent of your sapient discoveries. I would know on what grounds your late assertions rest."

"Oh, so you are curious, or, perhaps, merely jesting!" said the astrologer, with a cold smile, resuming his seat, and requesting the baron to take a chair opposite to him. "Well, I will indulge you, though you are hardly worthy to be so favoured. Know, then, that on first casting the prince's nativity, I perceived that on the first thirteenth of October which followed the twenty-first anniversary of his birth he would be exposed to imminent peril, and that unless a revolution took place in the planetary system between the hours of twelve and one at midnight, the prince would end his mortal career before the first hour of the morning. Of this I fully ap-

prized his father, but to no purpose, for you see how entirely he overlooked my warning. His destiny is a strange one—I mean the prince's,"—observed the astrologer, after the pause of a few minutes, in which he appeared to be revolving in his own mind some point of deep interest. "I have just been attempting to elucidate some of the enigmatical points of his horoscope. Mars is lord of the ascendant—Saturn enters the seventh house: their evil influence, I greatly fear, will render him inimical to his affianced bride; and yet, at this very time, when such is evidently the case, the Native's mind is wholly engrossed with a female who is so linked with Beatrix of Hungary, that I cannot distinguish between them: she is not that princess, yet she is invested with her attributes. With all my experience, I am somewhat at a loss to unravel the mystery involving this period of the prince's life, in which all is contradictory, unsatisfactory, and mystical."

The baron had listened to Florenzo

with vexation and amazement. The mention of a female surprised him; he could not persuade himself that the astrologer was other than a visionary; yet, his assertions were strangely opposite, and contained facts he could by no means have ascertained in a common way. Still he was not willing to succumb, or suffer the adept to perceive he wavered in the least; therefore, assuming a sternness he did not in reality feel, he said—

“Cursed be those who dive into the mysteries of futurity, and wrest as it were by violence *that* knowledge a good and merciful God withholds from us. I have given countenance to such folly too long. In justice to my prince, his amiable son, and myself, I will suffer it no longer. You must promise me that you will cease to practise on the credulity of the former. Let things take their course; misfortune always comes soon enough. Why, in the name of God, should we forestall evil?”

“I will surely make no promise,” replied the astrologer; “you have no right to de-

mand one. I know my duty, and will perform it."

"And by so doing, consign Prince Albert to misery!" exclaimed Romana, angrily, and rising as he spoke. "By my faith, you are an incorrigible old man! The prince has hitherto been a dutiful and obedient son; but he is possessed of an ardent mind, and the farther he advances in years, the less able will he be to support the unnecessary restraints imposed upon him. The gentlest spirit, under continued oppression and opposition, may be urged to rebellion; should such be the case, or should he even assert his independence, he will destroy his father. You have so crammed the margrave's brain with chimerical fears, that should his son escape his control, who can venture to predict the consequences? They would be, doubtless, most disastrous. And then, pray, let me ask you, who would have to answer for it all? Why, you—  
you, Florenzo, dotard as you are."

The astrologer smiled scornfully.

"Passion degrades a man!" exclaimed

he, waving his hand. "We hold no farther parley at present. At my age, and with my experience, I am not to be tutored by any, not even by the lord of this proud castle, who, if he grows weary of the old man who has eaten so long at his board, may say the word, and he goes. Eugenio di Florenzo will be a burthen to no man."

So saying, the astrologer walked towards the turret stairs, and Romana, both displeased and ill at ease, retired to his chamber.

For several days all went on well at the castle. Romana, on cool reflection, repented his severity towards the astrologer, who, with all his bombast, he believed an upright man; and not wishing, at that juncture, to displease the margrave, he sought a reconciliation with his guest. Florenzo was not of a temperament to bear malice, and easily accorded his forgiveness to the baron, saying, as he extended his hand—

"You have a noble mind, my lord; it is a great pity you cannot believe in astrology."

The prince daily gained strength, and he was already able to walk up and down his chamber without assistance; the accounts, also, from Hermanstadt were favourable. Prince Charles had emerged from his sick chamber, and promised an early visit to his cousin. This intelligence was very agreeable to Albert, who began to grow extremely weary of the sameness and insipid dulness of his existence, and anxiously counted the hours that must intervene ere this promised visit would take place. A courier, about this time, arrived from V——, with dispatches from the margravine, announcing her safe arrival at her father's court, and describing the recovery of the duke as an event fully anticipated by his physicians. All these combined circumstances wrought a happy change in the margrave's habitually restless mind, and the baron endeavoured, by every respectful remonstrance he could use, to induce him to abandon the baleful practice of anticipating events, but without success. The margrave combated ingeniously every argument he

could advance, and Romana had soon the pain and mortification to see his sovereign pursue that train of thought and action which served only to render himself and those dependent on him miserable.

Prince Albert now appeared so well that he was left to enjoy his repose undisturbed by the attention of the over-anxious margrave. In the still hour of night, when all were buried in repose, did the young enthusiast (no longer fettered by his father's presence) recall the strange scenes in which he had been so conspicuous an actor, or feast his imagination on the idea of the fair girl whose beauty had made his senses captive, but who, alas! he feared he should never behold again. Fettered by his oath, he had not even the consolation of speaking to any one on a subject so near his heart; willingly would he have consulted and confided in Romana, of whose good sense he had the highest opinion, but as he had made no reservation, in the promise he had given the recluse, even in favour of the baron, he had no alternative but to keep his oath inviolate, and suffer in silence.

The third night after the margrave had given up his office of watcher in the prince's chamber, and after Albert had been about an hour alone, the strangest and most unaccountable desire to quit his bed took possession of his mind. In vain he reasoned with himself—in vain he tried to compose himself to sleep. The impulse at length became irresistible, and rising softly, to avoid waking his attendant, who slumbered in an adjoining closet, he succeeded with some difficulty in dressing himself; he then walked towards one of the deeply embayed windows, to gaze on the landscape that lay beneath the castle, and which a beautiful October moon rendered distinctly visible. It was nearly midnight, that witching hour of night, when fancy, mounting on its airy wings, peoples the space with fairy forms, the air with melody. Albert threw open the casement, to inhale the breeze, so pregnant with enchantment; but not satisfied with this limited indulgence, he descended to the terrace. His sensations, as he paced up and down, were



buoyant and blissful, and in the gratification of the moment, he overlooked the extreme imprudence of thus exposing himself to the damps of night.

The western tower, which lay on his left hand, was in deep shade, save near its summit, where, through an archway which appeared in ruins, the moon threw a slanting beam, and faintly illuminated the battlement beneath.

The solemnity—the almost religious character of the scene—powerfully affected Albert, and while he gazed and admired, he thought he saw a figure slowly cross the moonbeam. An interval elapsed, again the same appearance returned; the light breeze ~~=~~ agitated garments which, to all appearance, ~~=~~ belonged to a female. For a moment the ~~=~~ figure remained stationary, it then glided slowly from his view, and he saw it no more.

Lost in wonder, the prince continued rooted to the spot, so intense was his curiosity that he hardly ventured to breathe; so eager was his anxiety to gain another view of the mysterious figure, that

he could not move, nor till his blood almost stagnated did he remember where he was; he then reluctantly and thoughtfully ascended to his chamber.

During his former residence at Romana, the western tower had been untenanted, and from some story of terror connected with it, was carefully shunned by the retainers and domestics. Such idle fears, however, had no influence on him, and he often frequented its lone towers, in search of the nest of a particularly scarce hawk, which built in its ivy-covered ruins. One day, however, the baron told him he did not wish him to visit the tower any more, as, from its dilapidated state, he deemed the ascent dangerous; and Albert, in obedience to the wishes of his host, gave up, in future, his researches in that quarter. Now, however, if he could judge from appearances, the building was no longer uninhabited, and he felt no slight curiosity to know what description of person dwelt in an abode so gloomy and ruinous. If a woman, the mystery was indeed great, as at no time

had he seen the face of a female within the castle of Romana. Thus cogitating, the night wore away, and the morning was far advanced ere he fell asleep.

During the ensuing day, the prince's mind dwelt on one subject only. His absent manner and wandering eye soon created fresh alarm in the bosom of his observant parent. In vain he assured the margrave that he felt quite well—that apprehensive father would not believe him, and he had to endure a thousand petty trials and to answer a thousand minute inquiries ere he was suffered to enjoy a little repose.

The day wore slowly away, as such days generally do: every minute seemed an hour, and every hour an age, till night once more threw her dark mantle over the face of nature. The impatient prince thought his father and the baron would never retire. They seemed stationary—absolutely rooted to their seats. Once the margrave made a move, and Albert's heart beat quick, but its anxious throbbings soon ceased, when he heard his father give orders to his page to summon di Florenzo.

"I can assure your highness," exclaimed he, eagerly, "I need not the mediciner to-night; I am not ill, I am only sleepy."

The margrave waved his hand.

"Peace, boy! your eye is heavy—your palm hot. I will that you see Eugenio."

The prince bowed in silent acquiescence, and shortly after, Florenzo entered. Happily for my hero, the sage doctor was never to be put out of his way, and after asking his patient a few questions, assured his patron that his presence was perfectly unnecessary, that all the prince wanted was rest, and that if his highness really wished the restoration of his son's health, he would instantly leave him to repose. So saying, the old man quietly retired, leaving the margrave both disconcerted and displeased.

"Di Florenzo," said he, pettishly, "grows more insufferable every day. I must take him to task; this will never do."

The baron smiled, and Albert constraining himself as well as he could, and affecting to be completely overcome with sleep, his visitors shortly after took their leave, and the prince only waited till they were out of

hearing to prepare for another visit to the terrace.

The moon had already risen high above the towers of Romana, when the prince once more descended to the battlements. With eager steps he proceeded to the spot from whence on the preceding evening he had seen the figure: eagerly he bent his eyes on the dark tower. The moon again streamed through the archway, and again the fluttering of white garments met his view. Awe struck, the prince gazed on the figure, which remained stationary for a few minutes, and then, as on the former night, entirely disappeared. For some time, the prince lingered on the battlements, in the hope of again seeing the figure, but he was doomed to disappointment, and with a heavy heart and lingering step he retired to his couch, and then, as on the preceding night, the hours passed away without his being able to enjoy the blessing of sleep. Morning found him wakeful and feverish, and so did several succeeding mornings; for while the moon lent her lovely light, he visited

the terrace, and never was he disappointed of beholding the same figure—sometimes once, sometimes twice, and, with the exception of one night, always alone. On that night, he fancied he saw a second figure, but, as the garments of the latter were dark and undefined, it might have been nothing but the shadow of the former.

At length the planet so friendly to the romantic Albert went to light and cheer other regions, and his ardent mind sank into despondency. Listless and melancholy, day and night his heart and soul and every faculty of mind and body were absorbed by one subject, so engrossing, indeed, that for a time he even ceased to think of the recluse of the cave. It is not surprising, that what he incessantly thought of by day should visit him in dreams by night, and he often started from his restless slumbers, expecting to behold the vision of the western tower at his bedside.

One night, that he had remained awake longer than usual, and immersed in the usual train of thought, he fell insensibly

into a most profound sleep, no doubt wearied out with successive nights of watching, and his repose at first was even undisturbed by dreams; but at length it became less profound, and the following remarkable vision passed before the mirror of his mind.

He thought he again stood on the battlements of the castle, gazing on the western tower. Suddenly, he beheld a female form rise to view; the moon fell full on her face, and he beheld the lady of the cave! A veil of thin transparent gauze floated round her lovely form, and above her head, suspended in the air, he traced a royal crown. While he stood absorbed in speechless admiration, a majestic figure appeared at the lady's side, who gently taking a corner of the veil, removed it, and reaching up, attempted to place the crown on her head; but before he could effect his purpose, a lovely boy, with a smile, took it from him, and, after placing it on his own brows, vanished. The scene then changed. Albert found himself beside the lady: she smiled sweetly on him—he knelt at her

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feet, and would have taken her hand, but his father was suddenly there to oppose it. Again the majestic figure appeared, and taking his (the prince's) hand, joined it to the lady's, saying, as he did so—*This is the affianced bride of*——! but Albert heard not the name which should have followed. Again, the scene changed : his father and the stranger were gone; he stood on the brink of a precipice, holding the hand of the lovely lady; her dress was rich and gorgeous, shining with gold and jewels, his own apparel was no less sumptuous; a soft strain of music floated in the air, while an unseen hand placed a nuptial crown on the lady's brow: suddenly a fearful cry rent the air, and a frightful demon, somewhat resembling Prince Charles, rushed forward, and plunged a dagger in the lady's heart. The cry Albert uttered, on witnessing this dreadful act, awoke him, and starting from his bed, several minutes elapsed ere he could persuade himself that it was merely a dream. His situation, and the darkness that still surrounded him, however, at



length convinced him it could have been nothing else, and returning to his couch passed the rest of the night in a feverish state of excitement.

Doctor di Florenzo made it a rule to visit his illustrious patient at an early hour, that he might report the state of his health to the margrave, and on this morning he happened to come even sooner than usual.

"How has your highness slept?" inquired the astrologer, applying his finger to the prince's wrist.

"Tolerably," replied Albert; "I think I should have slept better had I dreamed less. Have you any skill in dreams, sir?"

"Very little, or, indeed, I should say none," answered the doctor, musing. "I have occasionally attempted their solution, but seldom with success. Dreams are often so vague and unconnected, that little, I think, can be drawn from them; though sometimes, I must confess, they appear otherwise, and wear an air of probability that is quite startling. If your highness

will favour me with the recital of yours, I will give it my utmost attention; perhaps I may be able to draw something from it."

Thus encouraged, the prince related his dream, carefully avoiding, however, the least intimation of his pre-knowledge of the female, and also any mention of the likeness his fancy had traced between the horrid demon and his cousin Charles. During the recital, di Florenzo showed evident signs of astonishment. The coincidence between the dream and his own discoveries was most wonderful, and when the prince concluded, so absorbed was the old man, that Albert more than once urged him to speak, ere he could collect his thoughts sufficiently to do so. At length, he said, in a low and inward tone—

"Why urge me thus to speak? Have not I already told you that I was no professed expounder of dreams. A Bohemian would answer your questions better than I. Besides, this dream, or vision of yours, appears so wild and perplexed, that I would have you regard it as little as possible—a

mere vapour of the brain, induced by solitude, indigestion, or some other physical cause. In the meantime, it would be as well for you to change the scene; the *air* of this place does not agree with your bodily or mental health. You can be neither *safe* nor *happy* in Schwartzwald!"

The prince started, and turned pale.

"Explain yourself!" cried he, eagerly.

"Why do you constantly insist on a thing so absurd?"

"Because," the doctor coolly replied, "it is the truth. Your highness must quit this neighbourhood without loss of time."

Albert was about to expostulate with the adept, when, most mal-apropos, the margrave entered, and the doctor, in his usual composed manner, advised him to lose no time in removing the prince from Romana.

Ever alive to a thousand fears on his son's account, the margrave instantly took the alarm, and ordering Count Saarsden to be summoned, gave orders for an immediate journey; while Albert, deeply chagrined, retired to seek and bid adieu to

his highly esteemed host, into whose ever-sympathizing ear he poured the tale of his recent and most unexpected vexation. When the baron heard of this hasty journey, though he would not wound the prince by saying so, he was internally rejoiced at the intelligence. He felt convinced the prince was equal to the journey, and at that period so many guests at Romana were rather inconvenient to its owner.

The margrave proposed remaining a few days at Hermanstadt, to rest the prince, as well as to arrange matters for putting di Florenzo's advice into execution on his return to B——, being fully resolved that his son should be no more at large till his nuptials with Beatrix were solemnized.

It was past noon, when, after taking a most affectionate leave of the baron, the illustrious travellers set out from Romana. This was the first time Albert had mounted a horse since his late adventure, and when he saw a strange steed led up by his equerry, he could not help feeling deeply affected.

“Ah, my poor Orlando!” sighed  
“highly valued were you by him  
served so well; but you are gone, and  
shall I meet your like again.”

“Nevertheless, you will find this  
animal, my lord prince,” said the  
respectfully. “I will answer for his  
ing. Swabia contains not his equal,  
in mettle or docility; and albeit yo  
regret the generous steed you have lo  
will find in Rhin, an animal that an e  
might be proud to own.”

The prince smiled, and bowed cour  
to the equerry, as he took the bridl  
his hand.

“If Rhin serves me half as v  
Orlando did, Sir Equerry, I shall be sa  
he does indeed seem to merit the  
you have so liberally bestowed upon .

At this moment a page advance  
announced to the prince that his illu  
father waited for him at the gate, w  
a few moments the prince joined him  
they rode forward, the margrave to  
son that a messenger from Herma

had just informed him, Prince Charles had two days before quitted that palace for *Romana*, attended only by his page.

"Where is he, then?" exclaimed the prince, anxiously. "I hope he has not fallen into the hands of my friends."

"I trust he has not," replied the margrave, "but I have my doubts; it is very imprudent in him, after what has happened, to travel through this wild region, attended only by that boy page; but Charles is of a bold and hardy nature. I wish he may not, one of these days, rue his temerity."

Just as the margrave ceased speaking, two horsemen were seen advancing at some little distance, and, on a nearer approach, they turned out to be the late subject of conversation, and his constant shadow, *Julio*.

Albert, on recognising his kinsman, uttered a cry of joy, and hastily throwing himself from his horse, ran to meet him. Charles, affecting equal delight, followed his example, and in the next moment the young men were clasped in each other's arms.

"My dear Charles," exclaimed Albert, first breaking silence, "how glad I am to see you! and yet how pained I am to see you so pale and thin: you must surely have been worse than they reported."

"I have been ill, certainly," replied Charles, colouring as he spoke; "and you were, in some measure, the cause."

"Kind, generous Charles!" exclaimed his dupe, putting a far different and better construction on his kinsman's words than they merited—"how shall I ever repay such disinterested affection?"

"By neither thinking nor speaking of the past," replied Charles, exerting himself to appear cheerful. "But, in the surprise and joy of meeting you so unexpectedly, I have quite neglected my duty towards my uncle. I must salute him, and compliment him on his excellent appearance; never, since I had the honour of knowing him, have I seen him look so well."

So saying, and with a friendly pressure of the hand, he quitted Albert, and advanced to pay his homage to the margrave.

The margrave received his unworthy kinsman with true paternal kindness. He was shocked to witness the change his late illness had wrought in his appearance. His form, lately so athletic, was shrunk and wasted—his heretofore clear brown complexion, was frightfully sallow ; yet, had he (the margrave) known the guilty secrets of his nephew's heart, he would have no longer wondered at the change. Nothing alters the outward man so much or so effectually as the predominance of evil passions. The ravages of sickness are trivial, when compared with the ravages of guilt: the vice of the heart corrodes the beauty of the countenance, and fixes an indelible impress upon the brow. A man may soon recover that of which illness has deprived him, but he can never regain that serenity of innocence, which, if once rudely dislodged, never resumes its seat. The margrave informed his nephew that they were then on their way to Hermanstadt, and invited him to return with them. The prince seemed to accept the invitation with



pleasure, and the young men remounting their horses, the cavalcade proceeded on its route. In the course of the ride, the prince carelessly observed, that when he met them he was on his way to Romana, having quitted Hermanstadt the day before, but being overcome with the exertion, he had been obliged to stop at the hut of a woodcutter. This statement, by the way, has little truth to recommend it, but it passed current with his unsuspecting hearers, who had no reason to doubt anything he chose to advance. Albert would willingly have reverted to the mysterious events of that day so memorable in his brief existence, had not an indescribable repugnance to allude to them in his father's presence withheld him. Charles, on his part, made not the slightest reference to the subject, and as each of the trio had his own secret, little general conversation passed. In due time they arrived at Hermanstadt.

Nothing could equal the joy of the household and attending nobles on once more beholding their beloved young prince.

How galling to Charles were their warm expressions of attachment and delight! What a contrast to the cold greeting he had received on his emancipation from a sick chamber! He felt more than ever that he was no favourite; and deep and bitter were the feelings of revenge he nourished against those who presumed to manifest such indifference towards him—him, who aspired to be their ruler, and in his secret heart he registered a deadly oath to be revenged.

Hardly had the travellers refreshed themselves after their journey, when a courier with dispatches from the margravine arrived; they announced the restored health of her highness' father, and spoke of a journey to Buda, on a visit to her sister, provided her consort would send a suitable retinue to conduct her thither. Her highness also hinted the probability of bringing her niece to B——, for the final ratification of her union with their son.

This intelligence produced various effects on those most concerned in it. The margrave was all hope and exultation; Prince

Albert, all despair; and the wily Charles all that can be imagined of jealous rage swelling and boiling till it nearly burst the bounds of prudence. With hasty step he sought his chamber: Julio was there before him.

"The day has at length arrived!" cried the prince, dashing the door to after him—"and the woman I adore is about to be torn from my arms; but, by all the attributes of that dark being with whom I am leagued, if you do not quickly put Beatrice and her sceptre into my power, I will denounce you all! Yes, my revenge shall be glutted to the utmost. Though I lose myself—lost past redemption—your guilt-torments shall regale my eyes, your piercing cries delight my ears!"

"Fine, very fine, magnanimous prince—most worthy brother!" exclaimed the page, imitating his violent gesticulation; "but pray let me ask you, while we are exhibiting such an amusing spectacle, where will your highness be? As the most noble, I hope you mean to set us the example. But till

is idle talking. Do you forget that no human power can touch *our* lives?"

"I do not believe a word of it," replied the prince, angrily.

"Then take this sword, and satisfy yourself," said the artful page. "Plunge it either into my heart or your own, and see if it will have power to destroy life."

This bold assertion staggered the prince, who, after a little hesitation, condescended to apologize to his companion for his indecent warmth. Julio was immediately appeased; indeed, it was no time (when his pupil was so much excited) to observe a needless resentment.

"I am glad," said he, "you see your folly. If you had not been blinded by passion, you would have seen that everything is working in your favour. Sign the paper I offered you yesterday, and I will conduct you to Buda—to the possession of your adored Beatrix. You shall bear her from her home; and then her father, rather than have her publicly exposed, will consent to your wedding her. By a short process, you

may dismiss his majesty to heaven or hell, as may be, and then that bauble you so eagerly covet will be your own. What say you? Shall it be so, or will you still remain the humble being you are? Now is the time to decide. You will never have such another opportunity."

"But, should I fail," said Charles, doubtfully, "I shall have no resource. The last ducat of my inheritance will be bartered for a chimera."

"Well!" replied Julio, "be it so; do as you please—mind, I do not press you. If you are satisfied, so am I."

Charles groaned.

"Where is the paper?" cried he. "Give it to me, and let me seal my—ruin, I would have said; but that cannot be: you and yours are friendly to my cause."

"To doubt that, were to commit a treason against us, unworthy of your candid mind," replied Julio, presenting the paper, while a fiendish grin distorted his sallow features. "Hail, sovereign of Hungary! hail, husband of the princely Beatrix!" pursued he,

as his dark and malignant eye followed the trembling motion of his victim's hand. "All hail! it is achieved, and you are triumphant!"

Charles would have flattered himself that his page spoke truth, but something seemed to whisper, "You are deceived." He tried, however, to banish such misgivings, and, turning to his companion, asked what next was to be done.

"Offer to head the retinue the margravine has asked for. Your services will be accepted, and you will quit B——, unsuspected of any sinister design. But mark, I do not mean that you should go to V——. When well advanced upon the road, I will devise some excuse for your quitting the retinue. Love and hope shall lend you wings; and ere fame with her hundred tongues can proclaim your absence, Beatrix shall be your own. Does your highness at all comprehend my views? and are you willing to make the bold essay?"

"Perfectly willing," replied the prince. "Can you doubt it one moment? What

would I not essay to call the lovely, transcendant Beatrix mine?"

"Enough, gallant prince!" replied Julio. "Repair to your uncle: he is at this very moment anxious to see you."

It would be unnecessary to say more on this subject: suffice it, Prince Charles implicitly followed Julio's advice; and, when everything was arranged, set out with a brilliant train for V——.

## PART V.

“ The knight and the ladye faire are met,  
And under the hawthorn's boughs are set.  
A fairer pair were never seen,  
To meet beneath the hawthorn green.”

His nephew gone, the margrave began to prepare for his own departure; and deeming his son sufficiently rested, on the third morning after his arrival quitted Hermanstadt, on his return to his capital, attended by a considerable armed force, to prevent any surprise from the formidable banditti of Schwartzwald.

On the night preceding his departure from Hermanstadt, Albert retired in deep dejection to his chamber. His cousin's



journey and its purport were alike displeasing to him; and feeling ill disposed to sleep, he motioned his attendant to retire. The man had certainly observed the signal, but, contrary to his usual custom, appeared entirely to disregard it. Albert was then in no temper to be trifled with, and sharply inquired why he was not obeyed. Leon (the servant was named) advanced, bowing low, entreated to be heard, intimating that he had something of importance to communicate. The valet's manner astonished the prince; his curiosity was excited, and he granted the required permission, at the same time making an apology for his recent petulance, for he ever made it a rule to address those beneath him with courtesy and politeness.

"Dear and honoured lord," replied Leon, "I see you are in sorrow: would I could lighten your griefs!—would that it was not my sad hap to increase them!"

"Torture me not thus!" cried Albert, impatiently—"I cannot bear it. Whatever you have to say, say it quickly. I would be alone."

Leon bowed, and commenced a relation, of which what follows is the substance:—

Oswald, one of the margrave's pages, whilst arranging some music in a cabinet adjoining his highness' private chamber, was locked in by a brother page. At first the boy did not discover the trick; but, when he attempted to quit the closet, he found he was a prisoner. Guessing it was the mischievous Adrian who had played him this unseasonable prank, he was about to call loudly upon him, when the sound of the margrave's voice, speaking in the outer chamber, prevented him, and sitting down quietly to await his retiring, became inadvertently the participator of a secret certainly never meant for his ear. The margrave was attended by Count Radstadt, who had only arrived that morning, and to whom he was giving orders respecting the prince's imprisonment. The margrave remarked it was an unpleasant alternative, but nevertheless one of necessity, as freedom (he had been assured) would prove dangerous, if not fatal to the prince, at that period.

“And what did the count say to t  
inquired the prince, hastily, and :  
rupting Leon.

“He acquiesced, my lord,” replied  
valet; “he could hardly do otherwise  
when your highness returns to B——  
will be placed in close custody, and  
suffered to walk your own length at lil  
till——”

“Gracious Heaven!” exclaimed the p  
turning pale with agitation — “can  
father meditate such injustice? What  
I done to deserve a chastisement so se  
Oswald has been amusing himself at  
expense. Leave me, Leon: you v  
your sovereign, and insult your master

“Bad as that would be, I wish it  
no worse,” replied Leon. “But I v  
stake my existence on Oswald’s vers  
he is not a youth given to jesting; be  
if he wished to joke with me, he v  
never have made free with your or  
illustrious father’s name. However, I  
you will change your opinion, when  
your highness that that old varlet c

astrologer is at the bottom of the whole affair."

The prince sighed.

"Alas!" said he, "that name sounds ominous of ill to me. But rest assured, Leon; I will never put myself in the way of the menaced danger. Can you be secret—ay, secret as the grave?"

"Did your highness ever know me betray you?" cried the valet, reproachfully.

"Never, by my faith!" replied the prince, emphatically; "but, at such a time as this, when my own father conspires against my liberty and peace, I may be pardoned for doubting you—nay, every one. Now to the point. Procure me the complete dress of a peasant, and particularly one of those fur caps so common in Schwartzwald. I will neither voluntarily become the tenant of a prison, nor incur the more hateful risk of wedding Beatrix. If my life and happiness can only be secured on such terms, they were better lost. Oh, my father! why does a mistaken reliance on the predictions of a moon-struck old man mislead

your better judgment, and induce you to treat your only child? But it is useless to exclaim: rather let me by decision adopt prompt measures to circumvent the plans of agitation against me. Never will I submit to waste my best days in inglorious captivity. Fly, Leon, and execute my orders. Keep the disguise at hand: I may see occasion to assume it at a moment's notice."

Leon felt no inclination to dispute the prince's orders, which he thought reasonable enough, and with his usual alacrity retired, and ere morning had supplied himself with every requisite for his beloved master's intended disguise.

Prince Albert, when he met his father on the following morning, found it very difficult to disguise his feelings, (for at all times he was but an indifferent dissembler;) but necessity compelled him to feign a serenity he did not feel, in order to elude that suspicion an unguarded word or action would not fail to excite in the margrave's easily alarmed mind. Happily for his secret, the margrave had so many things to arrange

previous to his quitting Hermanstadt, that as soon as the morning repast was over he retired to his cabinet; while Albert, thus freed from his scrutiny, passed an hour or two in close consultation with his confederate, Leon.

At length the hour arrived for their departure, and the illustrious travellers set out on their journey. It was arranged that they should sleep at St. Hubert's, as they had done on their way to Hermanstadt, and it was from thence the prince meant, if possible, to make his escape. He declined Leon's attendance, not wishing to expose him to the margrave's rage, and also averse from the idea of having a witness to every folly he might commit in his unrestrained wanderings.

As they pursued their journey, the margrave informed his son that he intended, on his return to B——, to send a special embassy to W——, to treat with the duke respecting the expulsion of the fierce brigands from their mutual territory of Schwartzwald. In the course of the con-

versation, he also intimated that in case his neighbour complied with his wish, he should nominate Prince Charles to the command of the forces of B——.

“He is a restless being,” observed the margrave, “and should be kept stirring.”

Albert could not help evincing deep chagrin at this intelligence.

“Alas!” my father, said he, deeply sighing, “were it not for your endless fears on my account, that office, of right, should appertain to me; but with deep sorrow I say it, I am little better than a cipher. In every public act I am overlooked—no post of honour is assigned to me; while my more fortunate cousin, nay, while every young prince around us, is earning laurels and renown, I am thrust for safety into some obscure corner, and another and a happier man acquires that fame my soul pants to attain. All Germany will echo with my disgrace—my pusillanimity; and what in reality is the effect of dire necessity, will be ascribed to cowardice.”

“Impossible!” exclaimed the margrave,

startled by his son's words and manner, so different from his usual mild and submissive demeanour—"impossible, Albert! No human being will dare to affix opprobrium to your name. Every one must know that you lead your present secluded life in obedience to my desire. I have your welfare and that of the state too warmly at heart to suffer you to expose yourself to useless danger; therefore let me hear no more of this. Am I not your father and your sovereign? Should you then dare to question my commands? Your duty, young man, is *obedience*."

Albert bowed his head almost to his saddle's bow, to conceal the burning blush that mantled to his very brow. No word, however, escaped his lips: he had too much real respect for his father to make farther opposition, although his heart almost swelled to bursting at the hopelessness of his situation.

"Alas! I cannot choose but act as I have determined," said he, internally, while a bitter sigh burst from his oppressed and



labouring bosom. "Had he given me the most distant prospect of emancipation, would not have deserted him; but now it must be—I must flee. May God pardon my rebellion, if such it must be termed!—Yet to await imprisonment—no, no! never!"

Deeply occupied with their own respective thoughts, which, as may be supposed, were neither cheering nor agreeable, the father and son rode on in silence, and in due time arrived at St. Hubert's. A courier having preceded the train, a splendid banquet awaited the illustrious travellers; and the abbot, with his usual courtesy, met them at the gate, and conducted them to the refectory.

As soon as the repast was ended, the margrave, in consideration of the prince's recent illness, rose to retire. Albert trembled as he advanced to bid his sire good night. The remembrance of their late disagreement, and the thought of what he was about to do, filled him with the most poignant regret. Nevertheless, he was resolved to go; and when he bent his knee for his

father's parting benediction, his frame trembled so violently that he could hardly support himself. The margrave observed his emotion, but attributed it to a cause foreign to the real one.

"Think me not a harsh parent," said he, tenderly pressing the prince's hand. "Every restraint I lay upon you is for your good. Retire to rest. I hope in the morning we shall meet in better spirits. You look pale. Oh ! say, are you ill?"

This suggestion alarmed the prince, and he hastened to assure his father that, excepting sorrow for the offence he had unintentionally given him, he had nothing to disturb him.

"Then think no more of that," said the margrave. "I have already forgotten and forgiven it. Go to rest; and may God bless and preserve you!"

Extremely affected with the margrave's manner, Albert felt his resolution fail, and he was on the point of confessing everything, when the idea of Beatrix and the state prison at B—— rushed into his mind.

He shuddered at his own weakness, rallied his failing courage, and, without looking again at his father, hastily quitted the chamber.

The apartments appropriated to visitors at St. Hubert's were connected with the monastery by a long gallery, perfectly detached from the cells of the monks, and closed, on their side, by a pair of iron-studded doors, which were always locked by the abbot himself, when he had seen his guests to their chambers—a practice he never omitted, be their rank what it might.

Albert, on his occasional visits to St. Hubert's, generally occupied the last of the long suite of chambers; but, on this night, his venerable conductor stopped short in the gallery, and opening the door of a small apartment, apologized for having no better to offer his highness.

“Three weeks ago,” said the abbot, “your late apartment was nearly destroyed by fire; it will take some time to repair it. I regret the accident, only so far as it obliges me to thrust your highness into this closet; how-

ever, before you again honour St. Hubert's with your presence, I trust your own apartment will be in a state to receive you."

Albert made a suitable reply to his reverend host, and having asked and received his benediction, was left to himself. Immediately after the abbot's departure, Leon entered.

"Joy, my dear master!" cried he, "we are better off than I expected. Instead of having to squeeze through a narrow casement, and run the risk of breaking your neck, you may now descend like a gentleman to the gardens. That little door near the bed leads directly to them; it is unlocked, and I have been down to see that all is right. I think his reverence must have had a presentiment of your highness' intention, by kindly putting you in here."

Albert smiled faintly at Leon's garrulity, and inquired if the disguise were at hand. The valet pointed significantly to a bundle which lay on the bed.

"It is well," replied the prince. "Adieu, Leon! Return to the hall, and stay as long

as any of the suite do. Let them not suppose you aided me in this desperate step. Dispose of that dress I have just thrown off, so that my having assumed a disguise may not be even guessed at."

Leon's heart was full: he would have spoken, but the prince motioned him to be silent, and, with a profound bow and a secret prayer for his beloved master's safety, the honest being retired, by no means dissatisfied with the share he had had in the enterprise.

With a beating heart, the agitated Albert listened to the gradually lessening echo of closing doors; and when all became still, he began to prepare for his departure. The nocturnal bell faintly chimed on the stillness of night, when the prince, covering his head with a large fur cap, descended to the garden. He was no stranger to the devious windings of the solitary enclosure, and guided by a few twinkling stars, made directly for a beech tree, whose spreading branches almost touched the high wall encircling the gardens. With little diffi-

culty he gained the object of his search, and, being an expert climber, soon found himself above the level of the rampart; seizing, therefore, a branch, he swung himself forward, and alighted in safety on the summit of the wall, which on the outside was thickly clothed with ivy. Trusting to the matted and tough fibres of this ever-verdant creeper, and to the lightness of his own form, he began to descend, and in less than a minute alighted in perfect safety on the ground.

Freedom, dear freedom, was now his own; and hastily breathing forth a prayer for his father's support under the bitter affliction he was preparing for him, he began to retrace his way towards the wild, rocky, and dangerous recesses of Schwartzwald.

During his long residence at Romana, the prince had explored many of the obscurities of the forest, and had already in his own mind fixed on the place of his concealment.

About a league from the castle stood the cottage of a woodman, to whom he meant

to offer himself as an assistant in his occupation. To labour for his bread he deemed an easy task, compared with the slavery he endured beneath the paternal eye. In the cottage of Uswolph his mind would at least be free, and his body also, when he had performed his daily task.

“Better,” said he, in soliloquy, as he journeyed on, “live at peace, in the humble cottage of a peasant, than under perpetual and galling restraint, in the palace of a prince.”

Day at length dawned, and he sat down on a bank to rest. He took this opportunity to make a light breakfast on the provisions with which Leon had supplied him; and when his hunger was appeased, he again pursued his way. By noon he was many leagues from St. Hubert's, and feeling fatigued, he climbed into a spreading oak, and disposing himself in his leafy bed to the best advantage, slept soundly for several hours. Towards evening he awoke much refreshed, and having again applied to his wallet, pursued his journey with renovated zeal.

Many a weary league, however, had the young adventurer to traverse, ere he gained the goal of his wishes, and many a step had he to retrace ere he arrived at Uswolph's cottage. During his journey, he had more than once encountered gentlemen whose calling appeared equivocal, and who probably might have had some particular conversation with him, had he worn a more promising exterior. As it was, he passed on unmolested, giving and returning the salutation usual with those of his outward bearing; but if he treated with seeming courtesy those heroes of the greenwood, he could not help making with himself a secret compact, that whenever he had the means he would visit that region in other guise, and give its lawless inhabitants another greeting than the one necessity at that time obliged him to bestow.

The second evening of his lonely journey was drawing to a close, when the blue ascending smoke, seen rising above a clump of aged oaks, warned him that he approached a human dwelling; and from what he remem-



bered of the scenery around the cottage he was in search of, he thought he must certainly be very near it. As he advanced, he became confirmed in his surmises, and in a few minutes more he stood in the presence of Peter Uswolph, a gruff old bachelor, taciturn from habit, avaricious by nature, whose sole business was accumulation—whose only indulgence was a beaker of foaming ale, in which he generally indulged most freely, and never was he known so amiable as during the period he was gratifying his favourite propensity, which, however, seldom happened till his daily labour was over, or on the anniversary of his patron saint.

Luckily, Prince Albert arrived late in the evening, and found the old man seated before his door, nearly asleep, and rosy, from his frequent applications to a can which stood at his elbow.

“Save you, master!” began the traveller, halting before the boor—“a fine evening, for the season.”

“Passing so,” replied Uswolph, rubbing

his eyes, and making sundry efforts to arouse himself. When he had in some measure succeeded, he continued, looking stupidly wise at the wayfarer—"Why, whence comest thou? Thou art not of this neighbourhood. Thou lookest weary—hast thou come from far?"

"I have been journeying since the dawn of day, father," replied the prince.

"Well, that is one way of answering a question, truly;" then glancing his half-closed eyes over the prince, he added—"yet not a bad one either. Thou art lithe of limb, with shanks of the longest, and might manage to pass over much ground between light and dark. Sit down, and tell me whence comest thou."

The prince gladly availed himself of the invitation, and sat down on the sod seat beside the old peasant, nor did he repulse his hand when, raising the nearly empty can, he thrust it towards him, saying—"Drink thee, man; thou be'st dry, no doubt, as I ever am, after much work or much walking."

When the prince had partaken of the contents of the flagon, he amused Uswolph with a very plausible tale, which he had the satisfaction to perceive was entirely believed. He then offered his services as the peasant's assistant, in his forest labours, professing to be right willing to serve him, at an easy rate; wanting, at that present time, little more than food and shelter. The bait took; the greedy old man willingly hired him, telling him, at the same time, that they should certainly not agree long together if he did not work hard. The days were short, he said, and while the light lasted he must not flinch.—“ No skulking, my young springal; mind you that.”

This point settled, the prince entered with alacrity on his new employment, and for some time Uswolph had little reason to lament his bargain.

The vicinity of the peasant's cabin to Romana gave the prince every facility he could desire of watching the western tower; but though he was indefatigable in his

scrutiny, no light and fluttering garments again met his view, and day after day, night after night, did he seek his humble home, a prey to ill-disguised disappointment. Conjointly with the wish of beholding the phantom of the tower, was his desire of discovering the entrance of the cave: not that he intended to intrude on its mysterious inhabitants—he regarded the oath he had pledged as too sacred to be violated; but it would have been inexpressible pleasure to his ardent and romantic mind to have known the exact spot where dwelt the lovely young recluse—to have been able to stand before the entrance of her drear abode—to sigh, not her name to the breeze, for that he knew not, but to invoke blessings on her head; in short, to breathe ardent and impassioned wishes, that they might meet again—meet, if it were possible, to part no more.

Thus time passed on, and thus did Albert waste his hours, alternately the sport of hope and disappointment. In the meantime, his unfortunate father was plunged into all the horrors of despair, bewailing in the

bitterest terms his loss, and loudly call on death to end his insupportable misery. It is needless to say all search after the prince had proved fruitless; the margrave was convinced that the dreadful predictions of the astrologer were fulfilled, and that he should never see his child again. Torn and tortured by agonizing fears, the wretched father refused all comfort; in vain those around him hinted at resignation, or ventured to suggest the probable return of the prince, whose absence must be voluntary; he would listen to nothing, but the imperious voice of his own fears, and the paroxysms of passion any attempt at consolation always produced made those around him shrink from the task.

Immediately that the absence of the prince was ascertained, the margrave had returned to B——, that he might have the advice of his counsel on whose wisdom he relied for taking the steps proper in such an exigence. Everything at that period conspired to irritate the mind of the unhappy father: he regretted deeply having

dispatched Prince Charles to Hungary; for should the Princess Beatrix arrive in Swabia while Albert was absent, might not the king, her father, take offence, as it could hardly be doubted, he would inquire into the cause of such an evasion; and an inquiry would necessarily lead to a full disclosure of the truth, namely, the prince's often-expressed repugnance to the projected alliance. To prevent this misfortune, a messenger was ordered to proceed with the utmost speed to V——, to apprise the margravine of what had happened, if possible prevent her journey to her sister's court, and urge her immediate return to Swabia. The margrave could not suffer, as he hourly did, without his health sinking under the conflict; he refused, however, to see the court leeches, in whose skill he professed to have no faith; but as his situation soon became very alarming, he was entreated to select one among them, and Count Saarsden ventured to inform him, that without the aid of a mediciner, he probably would not recover.

“To die is my earnest wish,” replied the unfortunate prince. “Oh, Saarsden, urge me not. Am I not deprived of my child? Has he not voluntarily deserted me? Why should I attempt to prolong a life hateful to myself—useless to the world?”

“Say not so, most gracious sire,” replied the count. “Are you not dear to your people? Is it not your duty to live for them? Beside, I feel certain your highness will soon be blessed with the sight of Prince Albert. Some youthful fancy has induced his absence. Trust me, he cannot mean to absent himself for ever.”

The margrave groaned.

“His evil destiny prevails,” replied he, in an under tone. “Saarsden, his horoscope is clouded. I may see him again—it is just barely possible; but how—and where? Neither great nor happy. Wretched, wretched, father!”

“Alas, sire!” and Saarsden bent his knee to the ground—“if I have found favour in your eyes, if my poor services are worth retaining, grant me only one boon. For

the sake of your country—for the sake of your august consort—for the sake of your much loved son—listen to the voice of my petition. See a skilful physician; perform the part of a Christian man; be not accessory to your own death.”

“You are importunate, count; but doubtless you mean well,” replied the margrave, faintly. “I would not rush unbidden into the presence of my Judge; nevertheless, I will not cease to pray that he will take me from the evil to come—and that quickly, too. In the mean season, I will grant your boon. Send for di Florenzo: in his skill I have great reliance; yet I would not that he exerted it in the present instance. He has other knowledge than what pertains to the mediciner’s art—that he shall use. Send for him, and also for Romana: I would see them both.”

Saarsden bowed, but he was not pleased that the margrave’s choice had fallen on the astrologer; yet he would not oppose his wishes. He knew di Florenzo was a good physician, and that the margrave would be



safe in his hands : he therefore retired, to ~~com~~<sup>dis</sup>patch a messenger to Romana, with ~~strict~~<sup>strict</sup> orders for the prompt attendance of ~~the~~ baron and Eugenio.

Meantime, proclamations were dispersed over the whole margraviate, offering a round sum for the apprehension of the prince, and manumission to any villain who should give certain information of his retreat. Pastors of parishes were particularly enjoined to note any stranger harbouring in their vicinage; and should any such be found, instant information was to be sent to the council at B——. Whether these steps led to any result, the course of this tale will unfold. Leaving, therefore, the public functionaries, pastors, et cetera, busily engaged in the scrutiny, I shall leave the margrave to the care of his physician, the council to its perplexity, and follow the steps of the precipitate Albert in his flight—a flight I cannot altogether excuse : from the fondness I naturally feel for my hero, I would say all I could in his favour; yet, in the present instance, he acted unkindly by a doting father, though

I must confess that that father, by his weakness and superstitious fears, in a manner urged his son to the rash step he had taken. For could it be supposed that a young man in the very flower of his age would voluntarily submit to a life of endless restraint, and tacitly consent to have every innocent wish thwarted, under the plea that astrologers saw danger for him in those scenes and situations particularly agreeable to one of his age?

A week passed over, and Peter Uswolph had no cause to repent having engaged the prince, whose zeal and activity seemed unwearied. Early and late was he in the forest; and seldom did he return to his humble home till long after the sun had set. How he employed the hours of twilight and darkness, Uswolph did not inquire; provided his assistant could produce evidence of not misspending the daylight, he was satisfied, and perfectly incurious as to the rest. In short, Peter only wondered at two things connected with his young inmate: first, that he drank no ale; second, that he

never appeared without a fur cap, which almost entirely concealed his face; but as the first was a decided saving, and the latter of no earthly consequence to him, he passed both circumstances over in silence.

The illustrious fugitive had resided some thirteen or fourteen days in his new abode, when, returning rather earlier than usual to the cottage, and passing, as he generally did, through a little hamlet, about a quarter of a league from Uswolph's home, he was struck with the greatest amazement, on beholding the *younger lady of the cave* sitting at the door of a detached cabin, beneath the shade of a linden-tree. She was clad in the homely garb of a peasant-girl; but the rusticity of her attire could not disguise the grace of her lovely form, or diminish the beauty of her angelic face. Her hair was braided, after the fashion of the country girls, and fastened behind with a knot of blue ribbon; but the slight band proved insufficient to restrain the luxuriant curls which fell in many a wavy tress over her neck and face, partly concealing the

Former, and, by contrast, making the latter appear doubly fair. Albert stood entranced, gazing his very soul away, yet hardly trusting the evidence of his senses. The mysterious beauty was spinning, and while she plied the distaff, she sang short stanzas of a simple ditty, such as he had often heard chanted by the young villagers in the adjacent hamlets. While the prince stood rapt in wonder and delight, another well-remembered face met his view. The elder lady of the cave appeared at the cabin door (also wearing a peasant's garb;) she spoke to the young beauty, and addressed her by the name of Conradine. The name vibrated sweetly on his ear, nay, it struck a tenderer chord; and on his way home he found himself repeating, in every possible cadence, the name of *Conradine*. Fearing to alarm the females by his unexpected appearance, he turned abruptly away, and plunged into the depths of the forest; but from that moment Uswolph's wood-cutter became indolent and abstracted, and was more frequently to be found gazing on the little

cabin which contained the object of his secret and profound adoration, than in hewing the trees that surrounded it.

Listless, and already weary of his new life, he passed his hours in idleness, singing love madrigals, or carving the name of Conradine on every tree. In the stillness of night he generally repaired to the vicinity of the cottage, and remained gazing on its humble walls till the pale blue smoke rising through the chimney warned him to depart.

Quitting his bed one night, as he had often done before, he took the road to the hamlet, again to gaze unseen on the abode of her he loved with the most romantic, engrossing passion. The pale silvery queen of night floating in fleecy clouds, threw a slanting beam on the retired cot, and played among the light branches of the linden tree that shaded the door. Not a breeze disturbed the heavenly calm, and the enamoured Albert, supposing the inmates of the sequestered dwelling buried in sleep, advanced towards the cabin with a boldness he had never dared to indulge in before, and

throwing himself on the seat so often occupied by Conradine, fell into a profound and most lover-like reverie.

I shall not attempt to analyse his thoughts, which doubtless all rested on one object, but proceed to relate an incident which occurred to arouse him from his sweet waking dream, and which, ere he was well aware of what he was doing, brought him suddenly into the closest contact with objects of the greatest interest and most intense curiosity.

It was past the witching hour, when a noise which he could neither describe nor account for aroused the attention of the prince.

“Are the demons of Schwartzwald again loose on me?” thought he, gazing from side to side, with anxious and prying curiosity. But nothing unusual met his view; however, the noise grew momentarily louder, and at intervals a thick vapour resembling smoke passed over his head. While he sat mute and wondering at the phenomenon, a loud crash burst on his appalled ear, followed by a sudden and fearfully vivid light. The

mystery was painfully elucidated, and waiting not to reflect, he obeyed the impulse of the moment, and sprang into the midst of the conflagration. The cottage was, indeed, on fire; and had it not been for the ready arm of the courageous and unshrinking prince, the lovely Conradine and her maternal friend would both have sunk victims to the destroying, unsparing element.

Courageous and resolute, Albert succeeded in his humane exertions, and without suffering much inconvenience, rescued the helpless and terrified females from their perilous situation; he also saved some of their apparel, and when they had put it on, he led them to his master's house. The elder female warmly thanked the preserver of herself and child; but Conradine was silent. Abashed at the novelty of her situation, and overcome with alarm, she could not utter a word.

"How providential was your interference!" said the matron. "How came you near our dwelling at so late an hour?"

"I had been to the castle of Romana, on my master's business," replied he, hesitat-

ing, "and was returning home when I saw your house in flames."

It could not be the few simple words uttered by Albert that so powerfully affected the young peasant girl, nor could it be his appearance, for had he even worn his proper guise, it was still too dark to recognise him. What was it, then? Perhaps her ear, faithful to its office, acknowledged tones once and only once heard, but still fondly cherished. So it might be; for she started, and involuntarily raised her eyes to the speaker's face, but, as I have already said, it was too dark to distinguish objects; a sigh of disappointment burst from a trembling heart, and she pursued her way in silence. Arrived at Uswolph's cottage, the prince, without ceremony, introduced his companions to the general apartment, and begging them to be seated, entered the peasant's dormitory, to inform him of what had happened and to beg his hospitality for the houseless females.

Uswolph, though somewhat close, nevertheless had, like other churls, his moments of generosity, and being, perhaps, too sleepy



to understand what Justin (that being the name assumed by the prince) said, willingly consented to afford a temporary asylum to the unfortunate women; he grumbled something about ale, and then turning on his pallet, soon gave audible evidence that he slept as soundly as before. Neither of the females, however, when pressed by their preserver, would taste of food, and Uswolph, had he been awake, would have stared with astonishment to have heard them also decidedly refuse his highly-valued beverage. The prince then asked them, if they would like to seek repose, but this offer they declined, and by degrees the elder female entered into conversation with him. I need not, I think, apprise my readers that this person was no other than Pauline, who little suspected that the gallant young stranger of the cave and their late preserver were one and the same. The prince was more enlightened, but he studiously avoided betraying his knowledge to his unsuspecting companion. In the course of conversation, Albert inquired into

the origin of the fire, but Pauline could give no account of it: she said, the flue of the stove might have been foul, or a spark might have communicated with the fuel piled up in a corner of the cabin, for immediate use—"however it happened," pursued she, "I am sure we ought to bless God, who sent you to our rescue; we can never forget your kindness. I only wish I had it in my power to reward you as you deserve."

"A good action, my worthy mother, is its own reward," replied the prince, endeavouring to support his assumed character by a clownish air and rude speech; "but, as you speak of gratitude, perhaps I may one of those days put yours to the proof, and ask a guerdon at your hands, which, if you refuse not, I shall indeed say you have a grateful heart."

"So that you ask reasonably, and I have the power to grant your request, you need not fear," replied Pauline; "but remember, the widow of Joseph Muldau is poor; money she has not——"

“Money!” exclaimed the prince, indignantly, forgetting, at the moment, all his prudence, “do you think money is what I want, or would receive? No! you have——” But here he paused; abashed at his own vehemence, and hastily rising, walked to the other end of the apartment.

If Pauline noticed this burst, she made no comment on it, and shortly after, overcome with extreme fatigue, accompanied by Conradine, and conducted by Justin, they retired to the chamber of the latter, where I shall leave them to recruit, by a few hours’ repose, their wearied bodies and harassed minds, while I take a walk with Prince Albert up and down a little natural terrace which fronted the cottage. To any one blessed with a lively imagination, I need hardly say, that the events of the last few hours were pregnant with interest to my hero—an interest of the most overpowering nature. How suddenly, how unexpectedly, had his secret aspirations been crowned with success!—and yet by what an awful accident—an accident which might have

cost him the life of one dearer to him than aught else the world contained. He had arrived at the completion of his wishes—he inhabited the same house with her, might converse with her, might—oh! ecstatic thought—might seek to gain her heart. How she became the inhabitant of her late abode, he cared not; there was a mystery connected with her, but doubtless it concerned not him. Who she was, was immaterial: rank and riches he despised; beauty, youth, and sweetness, were hers—and the heart of the impassioned Albert sought no more. He could love a peasant girl as well, nay, better, than he could love a princess; he could give up state and power for her sake, and, burying himself in the wildest recesses of Schwartzwald, forget the world and all it contained. Thus, soliloquized the prince, and thus, perhaps, has many a youthful, warm-hearted lover, done the same. In the midst of his sweet musings, the gruff voice of Uswolph was heard, calling loudly on Justin; and the prince, waking suddenly from his dream of

bliss, hastily entered the cottage, and prepared, without circumlocution (which he knew the old peasant hated) to give a distinct relation of all that had happened, speaking of the rescued females in a way that could excite no curiosity in his hearer, but rather stimulate him to shelter and maintain them till something better could be done for them. Uswolph appeared quite satisfied with the prince's relation, and, to his surprise, told him he knew by report who they were, though he had never seen them. The elder, he said, was the widow of Joseph Muldau, and the younger her niece; that they had only been a very short time resident in the village, and that the good Baron Romana, on being called so hastily to court, had kindly given orders to his steward to see that they wanted for nothing; but as an accident had driven them from their home, they should reside with him till the baron returned.

"I am not poor, Justin," pursued the old man; "I have neither wife nor child to plague me; and I may as well do a good

turn for the widow of Muldau as not, particularly as I know I shall thereby be pleasuring my lord baron."

The prince applauded his master for his liberality, though he saw it was not quite disinterested. He hardly knew what to think of the peasant's relation: he did not believe a word of it; yet he was assured such a tale must have been circulated, or Uswolph would not have been so well informed on the subject. Lost in the wildest and most improbable conjectures, the prince issued forth to his daily labour, determined on being diligent, in the hope of keeping his master in good humour.


Pauline, by this unforeseen and most unfortunate accident, was plunged into the deepest distress and perplexity; she had no one to whom she dared apply for advice: her brother was too far away to hear of her misfortune, and she feared, till his return, she had no alternative but to remain quietly where she was; though a residence in the cottage of a stranger, and in the society of men only, was very far indeed from being agreeable to her.

To escape the penetration of Uswolph, she imagined would be an easy task, but there was something about his *fur-capped* companion which she neither understood nor altogether liked: he was not (or she was greatly mistaken) what he wished to appear. The tones of his voice, too, were familiar, and she tried to discover what was the opinion of Conradine, without actually putting the plain question to her. Conradine was too innocent to conceal what she really thought, and her maternal friend soon discovered that their ideas perfectly coincided.

Though the prince could not unravel the mystery in which the *ladies of the cave* were involved, I shall not proceed with the story till I have fully explained everything to my friendly reader, as I do not see any necessity for keeping him or her in the dark on a subject so very interesting. When the margrave's order summoned Romana to court, he was reduced to a great strait respecting the safe disposal of his sister and her young charge. He would

have removed them to the neighbouring convent of St. Sibald's, had his good aunt, the abbess, been still alive; of her successor he knew nothing, excepting, indeed, that she was nearly allied to the margrave's family, and consequently not eligible for the protectress of the mysterious Conradine. As time pressed, it was necessary he should make a prompt decision; but before he finally fixed on anything, he, as usual, consulted his sister, whose ready wit often served him at need. She was rather startled at first, but after a short time given to reflection, she suggested, yet with some hesitation, the practicability of a measure which nothing but the fertile brain of a woman could have supplied.

Several years before the commencement of this tale, a very favourite attendant of the baron's had quitted clandestinely his master's service, and, after an absence of several years, had commissioned a pilgrim to inform the baron that he was married and settled in Danish Holstein. That a desire to see the world had induced him to





quit the place of his nativity and the service of his kind master, to which shame for his ingratitude, and a very ill state of health, had prevented his returning; but, that he could not be happy, or die in peace, till he had received the baron's pardon. The baron had long ceased to think of Muldau's conduct with anger or resentment; he therefore freely accorded him his forgiveness, and also sent him a sufficient sum of money to place him above want. A few years after this, the baron heard that Muldau was dead, and his widow comfortably settled in a small farm, which his bounty had enabled her husband to purchase. Since then, nothing had transpired respecting her, nor, indeed, till Pauline mentioned her, did Romana remember that such a person was in existence.

"I will represent the widow of Muldau," said the baroness, "and as we never heard they had any children, Conradine shall pass for my niece; we will assume the disguise of peasants, and pretending to arrive at the castle from a long and toilsome

journey, throw ourselves on your compassion. A tale of feigned distress will induce you to pity us, and for the sake of my supposed husband you will afford us your protection. You can have us placed in some one of the numerous cottages scattered over your domain, and give your steward orders to supply our wants. Our lowly situation will sufficiently conceal us, and thus we can remain till you are released from your attendance on your sovereign. In the meantime, you will have leisure to think of something else for us, and whenever you think proper," said the baroness in conclusion, faintly smiling, "you can send us back to *Holstein*."

The baron was obliged to approve this plan, having nothing better to propose; and late on that very evening, two travel-worn females appeared at the gates of Romana, craving admission in the name of God and his blessed saints. It is surely unnecessary to say who these females were, or to add that the piteous but feigned tale told by the elder received the fullest credence; in short,

that everything was done in obedience to Pauline's suggestion, and that the next day saw the supposed wanderers settled in the cottage in which they were discovered by Prince Albert—supplied with every necessary, and apparently as happy and contented as possible. Nor did this benevolence create surprise or suspicion, for in all the margraviate there was not a kinder lord or a better master than the baron; and the simple inhabitants of the hamlet did not fail to assure their new neighbours that their lord would never cease to befriend them, provided they took care to deserve his protection. When all this was arranged, Romana and di Florenzo set out for B——, the former breathing many a secret prayer for those dear beings he was obliged thus as it were to abandon, and most anxiously did he look for his release from court that he might return to his home, and remove from their unsuitable situation the objects of his deep and unwearied anxiety.

The second day after the admission of

Pauline and Conradine into the peasant's family, Albert returned home earlier than usual. No one was in the general apartment, or kitchen, but Conradine. Uswolph had gone on business to a neighbouring town, and Pauline, suffering from a cold caught on the night of the fire, was confined to bed. Albert entered with an abstracted air—his mind was occupied with the image—yet he absolutely started back, on beholding the palpable form of her who had been enthroned in his heart, whose dear idea was never absent, day or night, from his thoughts. Conradine started, too; a deep glow rapidly covered her fair face; she trembled, yet why she knew not. The moment advanced, and entirely forgetting his habitual caution, he raised the large fur cap from his head; the action permitted his fine hair to resume its natural position, and gracefully falling over his open forehead, awoke the most delightful recollections in the mind of the lovely girl. A bright blush again suffused her cheek as she beheld, in the peasant before her, the

gallant stranger, whose visit to the castle had often formed the subject of the most delightful contemplation. Her own and Pauline's suspicions, faint as they were, were fully confirmed, and in Uswolphe's humble assistant she recognised one who had made no trifling impression on her young and innocent heart.

"Lovely lady!" cried the prince, sinking with profound respect on his knee before the abashed maid, "pardon my presumption. I have intruded on your privacy: if you command it, I will leave you, though this is an opportunity I have long and anxiously sought for. Conradine, start not at my presumption, in thus addressing you by name. I am devoted to you; my heart and all its wishes are your own. Turn not away! frown not! I am not what I seem. Be mine in the sight of God: I can raise you to honour and distinction—can make you the most worshipped in the land. Since first I beheld you, I have loved you—loved you tenderly—passionately. Speak, speak! give me hope! Without you, the

world would be a desert, and I a wretch indeed."

Conradine blushed and trembled. The voice of love was new to her ear: retreat was all she thought of; but Albert, seeing her intention, gently withheld her.

"Flee me not!" cried he, in a deprecating tone. "Oh leave me not to misery and doubt! I have abandoned everything for your sake. Let no false delicacy steel your heart to my pleadings: give me an opportunity of winning your esteem and love. I will not hurry you into a decision; yet say something encouraging—say, most beloved, that you do not hate me!"

"Stranger," replied Conradine, in a gentle, timid tone, "I am a simple, inexperienced maiden. Your words sound strangely in my ears; all their meaning I know not. One thing, however, I can assure you, that, far from hating, I love you—even as well as I love either Pauline or Ernest; but perhaps"—seeing the face of Albert suddenly change—"I am wrong in owning that simple truth: if I am, pardon

me, for I know nothing of the customs of your world. Pauline is the guide of my life. I have never yet done anything without consulting her. She charged me, on coming here, to avoid as much as possible all conversation with strangers. Leave me, therefore, till she knows and approves our intercourse."

Thus saying, and gently sliding from the detaining hand of the prince, she hastily retreated into the interior chamber, leaving him spell-bound to the spot, a victim to the acutest disappointment. The blood rushed from his heart to his face, and again violently reverted. He started from the ground, and fled into the forest, to bury in its gloomy shades himself and his despair. Unreasonable mortal! What real reason had he for despair?—and when he permitted himself to review coolly the late scene, he became of that opinion. "Has she not innocently told me she loves me!" cried he, a very lover-like transport. "Fool thus am to murmur! What more could one inexperienced say? Be it my busi-

to gain a warmer place in her regard than either Pauline or Ernest ever possessed, however fondly she may love them." Thus resolving, he returned to the cottage, with a heart considerably lightened of its previous despondency: distrust had nearly vanished from his mind, and he was resolved to persevere in his assiduities to his gentle mistress, and leave no effort unessayed to win the confidence, esteem, and, above all, the love, of one so guileless, so innocent of the deceptions too often practised by her sex.

Rising with the sun on the following morning, Albert, having some work to finish before his master's return, was hastening to the scene of his diurnal labours, when, passing a little bower formed by the spreading branches of a laurel-tree, he perceived the form of Conradine: she neither saw nor heard him; but the temptation was too strong to be resisted. With a beating heart, he advanced, and in the next moment was at her side. With a deep blush, she hastily rose from her seat, and would have retired, but Albert, with trembling earnest-



ness, conjured her to favour him with her attention. She hesitated, lingered, sat down, rose again—in short, appeared at a loss what to do. The prince took advantage of her indecision, and threw himself at her feet.

“Oh, flee me not!” cried he, entreatingly—  
“why would you leave me? I have much to say, and such an opportunity as the present may not occur again.”

“Then kneel not, I beseech you!” cried the innocent girl, blushing deeply; “it is posture far too lowly to use to me.”

“Will you remain, if I do not kneel” inquired the prince, with much earnestness.

“I fear I should do wrong,” replied Claradine; “but I hate to appear unkind to one who risked his life to save mine. I will remain, on one condition.”

“Name it,” urged the prince, earnestly.

“That you will reveal yourself to Pauline. I cannot consent to listen to you till that dear friend knows who you really are.”

“She shall know—I pledge you my honour she shall!” exclaimed the prince;

"the very first favourable opportunity I will reveal myself to her, and ask your hand. Do you not remember, dearest Conradine, she is pledged to me?"

Conradine's cheeks glowed like fire, and covering her face with her hands, she remained a silent but not an uninterested audient of those warm and lover-like professions which her companion's heart dictated. An hour soon passed away; but during that hour Albert had succeeded in extracting a confession that his society was most agreeable to her; that she even thought she loved him better than aught the world contained beside; and that if Pauline and Ernest would consent, she would promise to be his. What could the most exacting lover ask more?—and Albert was in the midst of a most impassioned speech, when the voice of Pauline was heard calling on her young charge. Starting from her seat, the timid girl obeyed the well-known summons, whilst her lover, retreating into the forest, pursued his work with renovated zeal.

The above meeting was followed by more, and morning after morning di prince and Conradine hold sweet munion on the spot where their vo mutual affection and constancy were exchanged. Pauline was still confin the cottage, and her suspicions resp the identity of her preserver, for wa confirmation, had gradually died away the doubts thus laid down by the ba were taken up by Uswolph, who nar watched Justin, if possible to detect in tion, should any exist. One circum in particular excited the old pea doubts: the young man never (at any appeared without his cap, which so much concealed his features, that more than the tip of his nose and the part of his face were visible. Uswolph resolved to behold the whole of that tenance, so carefully guarded from and watching an opportunity when A slept, he softly removed the cap from head. The truth burst like a thunde on the inquisitive woodman. He had

seen the prince when he resided at Romana, and he was certain his servant, Justin, could be no other. An involuntary sentiment of respect filled his mind, and with timid steps he withdrew, leaving the prince to awake and adjust his cap at his leisure. Uswolph, as may be supposed, was very much disturbed at the discovery he had made: he hardly knew how to proceed, or how to conceal from his illustrious inmate the knowledge he had so surreptitiously obtained. After a thousand plans, he at length determined on consulting the priest of the parish, and for that purpose paid an early visit to the good man. His strange story was soon told, and he had the satisfaction of being fully credited by the holy father, who told him he had received but a day or two before a proclamation from the council at B——, respecting the prince's strange and mysterious disappearance from St. Hubert's, enjoining him to make the affair public, and to use every means in his power to ascertain if the illustrious fugitive was concealed in his parish.

"I did not," proceeded he, "think it at all likely his highness should be anywhere in this neighbourhood; for what, indeed, could bring him hither?—and I thought (but foolishly, as it has turned out) that if I made the proclamation public next Sunday, it would be soon enough. You, honest Uswolph, have convinced me of my error. No time, therefore, must be lost. I would advise you to hasten to B——, and in person apprise the council of the discovery you have so happily made."

Hoping to receive the reward promised for this piece of service, Uswolph did not delay putting the reverend father's advice into execution. Pretending business with the principal merchant at B——, who generally purchased his timber, he set out for that city; but little did Albert suspect that his errand was a feigned one, or that the crafty old peasant had made himself master of his secret.

A heavy fall of rain, almost amounting to a flood, which followed Uswolph's departure, prevented Albert's quitting the cot-

tage. Pauline deeply lamented this untoward circumstance on Conradine's account, who could not conceal from her watchful friend the deep interest she took in everything that concerned their preserver. She wished most earnestly for her brother's return, to remove her from her present dangerous situation; and, when too late, deeply repented having accepted Uswolph's offer, as anything would' have been preferable to the risk incurred by exposing Conradine to the society of total strangers; and she half resolved to retire to St. Sibold's, be the consequence what it might, rather than continue in the dangerous vicinity of the suspected Justin.

In the meantime, Conradine treasured every word the prince uttered in her heart; and though he concealed not that he wore a disguise, yet the thought that he was other than he seemed influenced not her guileless heart. She loved her *Justin*, for his own sake; and whether he were prince or peasant, still would he be equally dear to her. Till this child of nature saw the prince, she

had never given her own mysterious situation one thought, nor ever felt curious to know who or what she was. Her existence had been uniformly happy; her wants regularly supplied: she loved the baron and his sister with filial affection; and if she had heard of a world beyond her quiet home, she wished not to become an inhabitant of it—at least, not before that night on which she first saw the young and gallant Albert. When she discovered that her preserver and the noble stranger were one and the same, her heart bounded with delight; and she would have rejoiced to have been permitted to impart the joyful intelligence to Pauline, had not her lover forbade her.

“Trust to my honour, Conradine,” said he, “and in good time your kind friend shall know all.”

Conradine trusted, and Albert's secret still remained untold. In one of their confidential conversations in the bower, the amazed prince learned that it was indeed Conradine whom he had seen on the western rampart of Romana, and from other

Circumstances which she innocently and inadvertently let fall, he was certain that *the Ernest* she so often mentioned with such fondness was no other than Romana. For the first time, a suspicion injurious to the baron's honour took possession of his mind. He could not help surmising that Conradine was his child, and that a sentiment of human pride and weakness had induced him to seclude one whose appearance

the world would throw a shade over a character hitherto unimpeached, and which took no small pains to keep above reproach. Pauline, he supposed to be the unhappy mother; and he long reasoned with himself on the propriety of introducing the curious offspring of Romana to his illustrious father, as the wife of his son and the future Margravine of B——; but love surmounted every scruple, and overlooking all the obstacles which family pride, his contract with Beatrix, and filial duty threw in his way, he resolved on making Conradine his wife.

The absence of Uswolph seemed favour-



able to his wishes, and he was determined to make good use of an opportunity that might never occur again. To satisfy the increasing scruples of his fair mistress, he promised to disclose everything to Pauline, and on the very night of the day the old peasant left his home, the astonished baroness beheld the stranger of the cave at her feet! I will not dwell on the scene that followed this discovery, nor relate at length all the arguments used by the prince to convince his auditress he was acting right, or that she would be fulfilling her duty in bestowing Conradine on him.

“No, no,” said the baroness, at the conclusion of a long argument, “I have no authority to dispose of Conradine: she has a guardian, who must be first consulted. You have a father, prince—a justly offended father. Would he suffer you to espouse one whose situation is so equivocal? No—again, I say, no!—and if you persist in urging your suit, you will drive me and my charge from this humble abode, which necessity, not choice, obliges us to occupy. Re-

turn to your home — to your unhappy father, who is even now dying of a broken heart, brought to the very brink of the grave, by your cruel desertion. Return to the duties of your high situation, and forget Conradine—she can never, no never, be your wife!”

The prince had not time to reply to this prudent but unpalatable advice, for Conradine entered, and Pauline signed to him to be silent. Seeing the prince without his cap, a blush rose to the cheek of the maiden, who, turning a timid glance on her maternal friend, sought to discover how she had received the young man’s explanation. The gravity of the matron’s aspect alarmed her; she turned deadly pale, and bursting into tears, threw herself on Pauline’s bosom.

“I will not reproach you, my child,” said this amiable woman, “with the deceit you have practised towards me, in concealing your stolen interviews with this imprudent stranger. You owe him gratitude, for his timely assistance in rescuing you from a horrid death; but there exist in-

vincible obstacles to an union with him. Friendship is the only sentiment you are permitted to entertain for one placed far above *you*. From this moment, I must insist on your resigning all hopes, and casting an unfortunate passion from your heart: forget that you ever knew one who has taught you the worst lesson a female can ever learn—the art of deception; but I see you are deeply affected, and, I trust, fully sensible of your error. Promise me, by way of expiating your first fault, that you will never hold private converse with Justin, while you unhappily remain an inmate of the same house: he, I trust, has too much honour—too high a respect for himself and those with whom he is connected—to seek to render an innocent unpretending girl contemptible, by pursuing a line of conduct which must ultimately involve her in misery and disgrace.”

Conradine sobbed, and in broken accents gave the promise thus peremptorily demanded, but still without daring to turn her eyes on her agonized lover, who,

during Pauline's long speech, had with difficulty kept silence. When, however, he heard Conradine, without one remonstrance — one struggle — give him up, his heart grew too large for the narrow boundary of his bosom. He cast a glance at her, but such a glance—it spoke reproach, love, disappointed tenderness, and despair; and hastily resuming his cap, he quitted the cottage, almost vowing never to re-enter it. But an hour given to reflection enabled him in some measure to quell that irritability of temper which had driven him from the cabin, and he resolved to remain in his present abode, at least till Uswolph's return; as, from the isolated situation of the dwelling, he did not deem it safe to leave two females alone in it, exposed to the casual visits of strolling mendicants, or, perhaps, still worse, the banditti of Schwartzwald.

Conradine, when left alone with Pauline, at the entreaty of that sincere friend, recapitulated as nearly as possible the different conversations she had held with her

lover, and the promises he had made of raising her to an elevated situation.

"But, if greatness," said the innocent girl, in conclusion, "had been all he had to offer, I should never have loved him as I do. I hardly know the meaning of the word, but I know what is meant by that more heart-endearing word, *goodness*; and surely Justin deserves to have that epithet prefixed to his name. Do you not think so, kindest mother?"

"I think he has many virtues," replied Pauline, seeing that Conradine waited for her reply, "but he has also his share of human frailties. Were I at liberty to explain all, I know you would, however painful the necessity, confess as much. I trust in God we shall soon be released from our present disagreeable situation. Our friend, I hope, will soon return, and take us hence. While we remain here, you cannot, my poor child, regain that calmness so essential to your future peace; you must, however, shun dangerous associations as much as possible, and I am sure you will never forget your

promise to me. It afflicts me sensibly to give you pain, but I should be wanting in my duty if I suffered you to keep up an intercourse that can only end in misery and total ruin to both parties. We will now retire, and may the saints grant our sojourn here may be as short as possible !

## PART VI.

“ When lovers meet in adverse hour,  
’Tis like a sun glimpse through a shower—  
A wat’ry ray, an instant seen,  
The darkly-closing clouds between.”

ON the fifth evening after Uswolph’s departure, Pauline and Conradine were sitting on one side of the stove, busily employed with their distaffs, and Albert (whose diurnal labour was completed) on the other, carving rude faces on a piece of wood: his eyes often wandered from an occupation in which he felt little interest, to steal a glance at the lovely Conradine, whose downcast eyes and blushing cheeks seemed to avow a consciousness that she was

the sole object on which his mind was fixed. She dared not, however, return those stolen glances, but the prince, by that secret sympathy which is said to exist between lovers, needed no outward demonstration of her affection: he knew he was beloved, and that thought was a balsam for all his woes.

A sudden noise at the cottage-door aroused the attention of the unsocial trio: they instinctively turned their eyes to the spot, and, much to the alarm of the females, they beheld four armed men rush into the apartment, and, in an officer that followed them, Albert recognised Count Saarsden; nor was his indignation lessened when he beheld Uswolph in the rear, to whose ill-timed interference he was certain the present intrusion was owing, and the real motive for whose absence was now fully and most unpleasantly explained.

Albert started up, but retreat, had he meditated it, was impossible, for he was in a moment surrounded, and made prisoner in the margrave's name.

Conradine, terrified almost to death at



this (to her dreadful scene), uttered a loud scream, and sunk fainting into the arms of the pale and trembling Pauline. The count spoke sharply to the unhappy lady, for Uswolph had apprized the council of the prince's frequent interviews with the younger female, and in consequence an order had been given to arrest her and her companion, with the prince; and, uttering a loud halloo, several men appeared, and, without the least ceremony, were preparing to hurry Pauline and her senseless charge away, when Albert interposed, and sternly commanded them to forbear. He suddenly dashed off his cap, (which on the first appearance of the intruders he had resumed,) and boldly said—

“Soldiers, behold your prince!”

This sudden exclamation petrified the men, for till then they were ignorant that it was against their young prince they were acting. Count Saarsden, however, evinced no surprise; on the contrary, he rejoiced that Uswolph's information had been so correct, for so complete was Albert's disguise, that

till the cap was removed, he was not sure he had secured the prince.

"Soldiers!" repeated the indignant Albert, "do you recognise me?"

The men made profound obeisances.

"You acknowledge me, then?" pursued he. "It is well: on your fidelity to my father, on your love to myself, I rely. Touch not these females, as you value my future favour—they are dear to me. I resign myself to the wishes of my sovereign, whose signet I see your leader bears; but *they* have done nothing to subject them to arrest, nor will I stand by and see them become your prisoners."

The soldiers, moved by this address, cast inquiring looks from one to the other, and seemed doubtful how to act. The prince stood between them and the trembling Pauline with a dauntless mien. The count saw the men wavered, and felt how necessary it was for him to be firm and decisive. He reminded the prince that he had full authority to arrest him and those found in his company, and was fully determined on

doing his duty. Albert was distracted between a sense of right and a wish to spare his adored Conradine a participation in his punishment. He stood mute and motionless; the fire of his eye had faded: he clasped his hands, and, looking up to Heaven, appeared invoking assistance from a superior power. By this time, Pauline had recovered her composure: gently releasing Conradine from her arms, and placing her on a seat, she approached the prince, whom she exhorted in a persuasive voice to recollect himself, and suffer the orders of the margrave to be complied with. Aroused by the sound of her voice, Albert started; he looked tenderly on the slowly reviving Conradine—

“O God,” cried he, “support her, and enable her to submit to the decrees of arbitrary power without shrinking!—support me, also, merciful Father! for I stand on the brink of a frightful precipice;—but this tyranny cannot last for ever,” pursued he, in a lower tone. “The time will come, when you, Conradine, shall be rewarded for

all this unnecessary cruelty. Your Justin pledges himself, and may he perish if he ever withdraws the gage!"

The count now grew impatient—

"Your highness," said he, "must be aware that I cannot delay the execution of my sovereign's orders: they are positive, and admit of no evasion. Every respect shall be paid these women; I will myself see to that. Permit me to hasten your departure; night draws on, the roads are heavy, and ere noon the day after tomorrow, if possible, I must be at B——."

"'Tis well," said the prince, haughtily. "It is your turn now. Use your brief authority with discretion, and I shall not complain." Then turning to Conradine, he took her hand; it was cold and trembling; he placed it in Pauline's, and entreated that kind friend to watch over her interesting charge.

"I shall see you again soon, my beloved Conradine," said he, in a whisper; "nothing shall keep me from you. Never forget that I love you better than my own life."

1

He then fell back, and motioned to the count that he was ready to depart. A covered litter and a saddled horse were now led forward; into the former the agitated females were assisted by the count, and the unhappy prince, who could scarcely restrain his indignation on beholding this stretch of power, and who secretly reproached his father for sanctioning such a piece of unnecessary severity. When Conradine and her friend were seated in the vehicle, the count closed and locked the door, giving the key, with some private orders, to a subaltern officer; he then ordered the driver to proceed. Six men, well armed, guarded the litter, while the person in possession of the key mounted a small seat in front of the vehicle. Indignation and sorrow were alike blended in the countenance of the prince; he stood with folded arms, watching the slowly retreating cavalcade, and when he could no longer behold it, he turned fiercely to Count Saarsden, and said—  
“I am ready.”

His horse was in waiting; he vaulted

into the saddle, and, with an authoritative voice, ordered the unpleasantly situated count to lead on. In moody silence the prince and his escort proceeded on their route, and in due time arrived at B——. The illustrious prisoner was immediately conducted to the state prison, and the count hastened to the palace to inform the margrave of the success of his mission.

The margrave and margravine were together when the happy intelligence of their son's arrival reached them. The former was still in a very weak state, and confined to his private apartments, while the latter, though in good health, was a prey to a secret disquiet, which she kept, however, to herself. She had been returned from V—— only two days, not accompanied, as the margrave expected, by his nephew, whom she had not seen. The fact was, that that prince had quitted his noble companions on the confines of the dominions of A—— under some trivial pretence, promising, however, to be at V—— as soon, if not, indeed, before them. He did not, however,

keep to his engagement, and no one could give any account of his highness, Julio alone having borne him company.

Had not the margrave's mind been fully occupied with a nearer and dearer interest, he must have suffered serious uneasiness on Prince Charles' account; but as it was, he hardly gave his strange conduct a thought, and no one felt interest enough in the prince's welfare, to intrude his image on his uncle's mind at a time when he was suffering such acute distress.

Overpowered with delight at Count Saarsden's intelligence, and satisfied that his son was once more beneath his own influence, the margrave could not summon sufficient resolution to see him, but contented himself with ordering that he should be treated with the utmost indulgence, and be attended by his own domestics, Let on among the rest, he having escaped all suspicion about the affair at St. Hubert's. Hardly had this point been settled, when the count again appeared to announce the arrival of the litter containing the females.

"We will see them ourselves," said the margrave. "Conduct them hither."

"My dear lord," said the margrave, "do not agitate yourself; permit me to see them. I will question them, and find out how far our degenerate son has carried himself."

"No, Sophia," replied the margrave; "I will judge of that myself—order Romana to our presence."

The baron was prompt in his attendance; scarcely had he entered at one door, when the luckless females appeared at an opposite one. The margrave was in the act of informing Romana of Count Saarsen's success, when the eyes of the dismayed baron rested on the form of his own sister and Conradine.

The females saw him almost at the same moment; but, to the extreme surprise of the baron, neither appeared to recognise him. This strange circumstance was the effect of Conradine's prudent forethought; she knew Romana was in close attendance on his sister, and it was by no means improbable



that she and her timid companion might be seen by him in the presence of witnesses.

"Should that be the case," said she to Conradine, "you must not appear to know Ernest. We are peculiarly situated; and the least show of a secret understanding between us might be fatal to us all."

The ingenuous girl, however, found it very hard to restrain her feelings when she actually found herself in Romana's presence, but fear soon usurped every faculty of her mind, and she stood with downcast eyes by the side of Pauline, expecting she hardly knew what of evil.

The margrave, not deigning to look at the culprits, was preparing to address them, when a sudden tumult took place in the apartment: the margravine became violently agitated, with difficulty suppressed a scream, and fell into the arms of Romana, devoid of motion. The baron was not altogether astonished at this circumstance. He expected that the appearance of one of the females at least would create surprise and inquiry, and he hoped Pauline was suf-

ficiently on her guard to answer any questions that might be put to her with discretion.

The margravine's alarming and unaccountable indisposition put a stop to the margrave's purposed inquiries. The apartment was immediately cleared, and when the margravine's ladies appeared to take charge of her highness, Romana prepared to retire. The margrave stopped him at the door.

"I will speak with you in the antechamber," said he. Then charging the females to attend carefully to his consort, and summon her physician, he followed Romana to the outward apartment.

"Well, baron," said the margrave, "you see that old peasant's information was correct. Do you know the persons of the females? They belong, it seems, to your estate."

"May it please your highness," said Romana, greatly embarrassed, "to pardon me an involuntary fault; it is true the women resided in a cottage on my estate, but——"

"My dear Romana," exclaimed the margrave, "you mistake me: in mentioning the circumstance of the women belonging to you, I meant not to throw any blame on you; far from it; all I intended was to make you my deputy. The margravine's illness prevents my questioning them; on you must devolve that office. Be very minute and particular in your interrogations; and if you find that they were unacquainted with the real rank of my misguided sons, bear them to your castle, and there confine them strictly till the prince espouses the Princess of Hungary.

The baron could hardly believe that he heard aright. Was it indeed possible that he was appointed to the office he coveted above all others? Was it possible that the task of questioning the prisoners was confided to him alone! Unheard-of good luck! And so penetrated was he with gratitude to Heaven, that he could hardly command his voice while he assured his sovereign that his wishes should be his law.

The baron, thus released from a further

**attendance** at court, lost no time in seeking **his** unhappy sister, who, shut up in a **chamber** with Conradine, awaited the **margrave's** decision with fear and trembling.

Count Saarsden had still charge of the **females**, and when Romana demanded to see **them**, he was refused, till the count in **person** gave his sanction to the interview. The **baron** found the unhappy captives immersed in melancholy. Conradine, without **knowing** what extent of danger she had to dread, **was** weeping, while Pauline, not less **depressed**, was vainly attempting to console **her**. Moved by the scene before him, **Romana** first embraced, and then began to **soothe** the sufferers; he cheered them with the assurance that they were to accompany **him** to Romana. Conradine uttered a cry of **joy**, and fell almost fainting into the **baron's** arms. Pauline supported herself **with** difficulty—tears streamed copiously **from** her eyes—she found happiness harder **to** bear than sorrow, for in her situation it **was** much less to be expected. She would **have** questioned her brother respecting this

most unlooked-for change, but he assured her that he had then no time to spare, as it was necessary for him to make instant preparations for their departure.

"You will be ready when I return?" said he, pressing a hand of each within his own.

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed the baroness; "we shall indeed; all I desire is to quit this place as soon as possible."

To be brief, the next hour saw the trio on their road to Romana, rejoicing in their wonderful escape from the imminent peril that had but just menaced them. In the progress of their journey, the baroness recounted to her brother the events that had occurred since they parted. Conradine listened eagerly to the conversation, in the hope that some inadvertent word might discover who her lover really was; but Pauline was so guarded, she was still doomed to uncertainty and doubt. When Pauline had finished her recital, the baron informed her the imprudent stranger was expiating his offence in solitude and captivity.

This sad intelligence drew bitter tears

from Conradine, and she seemed to love him better than ever for the sufferings he was enduring on her account; but she did not venture to give her feelings utterance, nor did her watchful friends think it prudent to remark her agitation.

The margravine recovered but slowly from her sudden indisposition; so slowly indeed, that for several days she was entirely confined to her bed, and for many more, to her chamber. No one but the margrave, her physician, and favourite attendant, was suffered to approach her. She would say nothing respecting her sudden illness, or assign any cause for it, and the whole court were much puzzled to account for a seizure so instantaneous, as the margravine was in excellent health at the time, and had never been so attacked before.

The margrave in the meantime gained strength daily. His mind, set at rest on his beloved son's account, gradually recovered its tone, and as his bodily ailments entirely sprung from a mental source, they were most likely to be meliorated by the

removal of the cause from whence they sprang. Though so much better, he was still too weak to visit the prince. He could indeed have sent for his undutiful child, for his heart yearned to embrace and forgive him; but prudence forbade this indulgence of his paternal fondness, and exerting an extraordinary self-denial, suffered Albert to remain in his prison.

The prince, meantime, chafed and fretted away the weary hours of captivity, cursing Eugenio, and lamenting more than ever his father's unhappy predilection for such men and such visionary theories as they inculcated. The thought of Conradine's sufferings not a little increased his own, but he saw no immediate chance of seeing that dear one, and assuaging her griefs. Enclosed between four walls, he could only think of that highly-valued liberty he had lost and which he was destined never to enjoy again; for much as he abhorred the thought of eternal imprisonment, he was resolved never to accept freedom at the price he knew he must pay for it. Better, thought

he, is the undisturbed possession of this chamber than a throne shared with the woman whose very idea is hateful to me. Rather than obtain freedom on such terms, welcome imprisonment—welcome death!

Brooding continually on the most melancholy themes, the health of the prince must ere long have suffered in the struggle, had not a circumstance which I am about to relate given a turn to his thoughts, and awakened new hopes in his ardent mind.

Leon, who was a free, good-natured being, no way given to much thought or melancholy, and who always sought out amusement in whatever situation chance threw him, made an acquaintance with a poor lad, the idiot son of the man whose occupation it was to cut and prepare the wood for the fires in the castle. This unfortunate being, from sundry bad propensities, such as petty thieving, a love of mischief, and a most incorrigible propensity to lying, had few friends in the castle. The unkindness he experienced on all sides soon attracted Leon's pity; and on more than one occasion,



when he saw him unjustly accused, and about to be beaten, he had interfered and saved his back from the lash, and by a few words of explanation, cleared him from the aspersions cast on him by those who more than once were the actual perpetrators of the mischief laid to poor Felix.

This sport of nature, with all his folly, could distinguish friends from foes, and his affection and gratitude towards those who were kind to him knew no bounds.

The vice that most frequently brought Felix into disgrace was gluttony ; no care, no correction, had been spared to break him of it, but this natural propensity ruled too despotically to be eradicated or even subdued.

To administer to this darling propensity, he was often led to bold measures, even to the bearing off the best part of the governor's own supper. Often was he watched ; but he was so dexterous and so cunning, that he was seldom caught in the act, or could any one imagine where he bestowed all the odds and ends he was for ever purloining. Leon actually, for want of some-

thing else to do, set himself to watch the fool's motions, little suspecting when he did so, what was to be the result.

Appertaining to the chambers generally appropriated to prisoners of rank, was a small enclosure laid out as a garden, in which they were permitted to walk. At the furthest extremity of this secluded spot stood a pavilion, or rather small tower, built on the outer wall of the castle, but in such a ruinous condition, and so crowded with lumber, that no one ever entered it, at least, no one but Felix and his father; the latter was the gardener, and kept some of his tools in the building, but still he hardly ever went near it; for when he had finished his work, he generally left it to his son to replace his spade, &c.; and Felix, profiting by these visits, used the place as a store-room for whatever his cunning taught him to conceal. In some of his stolen visits to this emporium of his roguery, it was afterwards supposed he had made the discovery so welcome to the prying Leon. The valet, in the first two or three visits he made to

the building, did not make any very interesting discovery, and he might, perhaps, never have entered it again, had he not, while hunting in a corner for an owl he had seen retreat thither (himself quite concealed from view by some old articles of furniture), heard a faint noise, as if beneath his feet; gradually it grew louder and louder, and presently, to his inexpressible astonishment, he saw the black head of the fool gradually rise above the floor, not twenty paces from where he stood. Felix, little suspecting who was watching him, drew himself up by his hands, and then with extreme care covered up the aperture from which he had issued with some loose boards and other lumber; this performed, he retired. When Leon was certain he had left the garden, he removed the boards, and a flight of broken steps met his view: unhesitatingly he descended them; they appeared to wind round the base of the tower; and after a short descent, he came to a door which stood ajar; he pushed it open, and entered a room similar in size to the upper one. This was

Felix's store-room, and well filled it certainly was with every description of plunder, from old garments to fragments of various viands, beside flasks innumerable, doubtless filled with not the worst wine he could pick up. Leon stood in amazement in the midst of this scene of robbery, and he no longer wondered that his quondam acquaintance enjoyed such a bad reputation among those who knew, and doubtless often suffered from his rapacity. From contemplating the fruits of Felix's industry, Leon turned to examine the chamber; for a strong suspicion took possession of his mind, that this tower had a communication with the vaults, or led to some secret egress from the fortress, so long in disuse, that its existence had probably escaped the recollection of its present inhabitants. Fearful of being missed, he resolved to delay a further examination to a more convenient season, and ascending the stairs, soon regained the garden. Anxious to communicate his discovery, and the hopes arising from it, to the prince, with hasty steps he sought his chamber.

In the meantime, an officer from the court had announced to the prince a visit from the margrave; and as Leon crossed the court in his way to the prince's apartment, he saw the guard of honour already drawn out to receive him. Though dying to make his supposed discovery known to his beloved master, he was forced to restrain his impatience till the margrave's departure; but, willing to employ the interval to the best advantage, he returned to the court, and fell into conversation with his highness's attendants, from whom he hoped to hear what was passing at the palace. Nor were his expectations vain; he heard with dismay that the arrival of the Princess Beatrix was shortly expected, and that Prince Albert was to remain a prisoner till that event took place, when his nuptials were to be solemnized without delay. Besides this unpleasant piece of information, they mentioned another event that he knew would be even more distressing to the illustrious captive—the supposed removal of the females captured with Albert either to a convent, or the safe

keeping of the Baron Romana, who, it was said, had orders to confine them closely till the margrave's final pleasure respecting them should be known.

"I should not wonder," said a pert young page, "if that pretty girl were not already a nun, or in a fair way to become one; the prince has a poor chance of ever seeing her again; that *I* know for certain."

Angry with the boy, yet willing to collect all the news he could, he was about to question him more closely, when it was hastily announced that the margrave was about to depart; and in the next moment his highness appeared, wearing an air of unusual vexation and embarrassment.

Paternal fondness, and a strong desire to pardon his rebellious son, influenced this fond father all the way to the fortress; he even reproached himself with his severity towards him, and felt half inclined to release him from his thralldom, and trust to his honour for the rest; but all these kindlier feelings vanished, when, after embracing the prisoner, he began to converse

on the past, and declare his intentions as regarded the future. The prince impatiently listened; and when his father ceased speaking, unhesitatingly avowed a fixed determination never to ratify (be the consequences what they might) the contract which bound him to Beatrix of Hungary; nay, more, that he was resolved to wed the lowly Conradine, or remain for ever unmarried.

The horror-struck margrave represented the folly, nay, wickedness, of such obstinate conduct; set forth all the advantages of an union with the Hungarian, and the ruin that must fall on him and his if he persevered in allying himself with a peasant girl.

“Wretched, infatuated boy!” exclaimed the margrave, in conclusion; “since reason and the pleadings of your father and sovereign have no effect, know my determination,—I shall no longer urge the claims nature has given me to your obedience.—I will enforce my authority. *You shall* espouse her I have selected for your wife.

In this prison shall you remain till you know your duty. Look not to work on my feelings, or move my pity. Henceforth you shall find me stern and unyielding. You are blind to your own good: be it my duty to compel you to obedience. No remonstrance: I am not to be moved from my purpose."

"Nor I from mine," answered Albert, in a low but steady voice. "I know and acknowledge your affection and the duty I owe you, but I am not to become miserable for life to evince my reverence for your highness. Long have I suffered—much have I borne—rather than wound your feelings. I can no longer endure the thralldom, the misery your over-weening fondness entails on me. I will never marry Beatrix, of Hungary—never, never! I can bear suffering, imprisonment, nay, death, but not her alliance. Let your anger fall on me alone; all I ask is pardon for her I love—she knows not of my rank: deal gently by her, oh, my father! she is most guiltless. I see your anger rising. I have done. You are just. I throw myself on your mercy;



but I can never purchase even your pardon by the smallest deviation from my fixed determination."

"I have heard you, infatuated, misled boy!" exclaimed the margrave, bitterly. "As your determination is fixed, so is mine. You have heard what are my intentions. We meet not again till you have learnt to bend your stubborn will to mine."

So saying, the margrave hastily quitted the apartment, and meeting Count Radstadt in the antechamber, gave him fresh orders respecting the safe custody of the prisoner.

"Suffer no visitors to approach your prisoner, count," said he, sternly; "nor permit him to leave his apartment till you hear from me again."

The count bowed obedience, and accompanied his sovereign to the court-yard, where, with a heavy heart, the margrave mounted his horse, and, accompanied by his suite, returned to the palace.

Immediately on the margrave's departure, Leon repaired to the prince, and briefly related his discovery, and the hopes arising

from it. The prince, agitated with his recent interview with his father, at first gave little heed to Leon's narrative, till the word *escape* struck his ear.

"Escape!" exclaimed he: "is it practicable? can I indeed escape? But how and when?"

Leon respectfully and concisely once more explained his ideas on the discovery he had made; and the prince, fully awakened to the subject, became more and more sanguine in the hope thus suggested by his faithful follower.

"I must leave it all to you, Leon," said he. "I heard my father order the count not to suffer me to quit this apartment; but my interests cannot be in better hands than yours; extricate me from this detested thralldom, and my gratitude shall know no bounds."

"To serve your highness is enough for me; I seek no other reward," cried Leon, energetically. "One approving smile from my beloved master were worth more to his devoted servant than all the wealth he could

heap upon him. Trust to me in everything, and if there be a way left open for my prince to quit this detested prison, he shall not long remain within its walls. With your highness's permission I will now go to examine the place more minutely; and may I be as successful as I wish, nay, as I feel almost certain of being!"

Albert smiled faintly at the honest creature's enthusiasm, gently hinting, as he departed, the necessity that existed for the greatest caution and prudence in his enterprise.

"Trust me, trust me, your highness. I will not injure your cause, if I cannot serve it."

It were needless, and would be tedious to describe the many attempts Leon made to explore the subterranean chambers, vaults, and passages, into which an idle curiosity had at first plunged him. Many days elapsed before he attained the full knowledge he sought; more than once he was on the point of giving up the pursuit, from its apparent hopelessness, but an ardent, and not

easily daunted spirit urged him on; and, at length, he surmounted every difficulty, and with no little exultation conveyed the joyful intelligence to his master, that he had found an outlet from the castle, so situated as to render it nearly impervious to the eye of prying curiosity.

"After a long and difficult search," said he, in explanation, "I found that one of the passages leading from the chamber below the turret was likely to be the one I sought. I pursued its many windings, and at length came to a small grated door, secured only by a single, very rusty bolt. On withdrawing this, which was no easy matter, I found myself actually beyond the walls of the fortress. Your highness may well imagine the joy I felt when I looked back and saw the grim old castle frowning above my head. The spot into which I had emerged was a rocky enclosure, thickly covered with briars and undergrowth, in the very heart of the forest. I must have made an immense descent, and actually passed beneath the moat, to attain this

sally-port, which I firmly believe is not known to exist by any one now in the castle. All I had now to do, was to return and lay the discovery before your highness; and I think if we can contrive to gain the pavilion to-night, about your highness's supper hour, we shall be to all intents and purposes free."

The prince mused.

"It will be difficult, my good Leon, to leave this chamber. The governor's visits, so punctually made every two hours, will prevent my gaining time enough to make the attempt."

"Something must be risked, and that without loss of time," observed Leon, "or your highness must give up all thought of freedom. I have formed a plan; but my prince may think it too hazardous to be ventured upon; however, as his situation is desperate, desperate measures must be resorted to. Have I your highness's leave to explain myself?"

"You have," said Albert. "Speak on."

"When his excellency comes at supper

time, I would have you secrete yourself in the wood closet, and let me tell him your highness is indisposed, and in your chamber. He will naturally wish to see you; I will conduct him to the door, and when he is well within the chamber, I will close, lock, and bolt it. My prince will be ready, and we can gain the garden, for the door leading into it is neither locked nor bolted; they know full well no one could scale those high walls. Once beneath the trap door, I shall fear nothing; for if that mode of egress should in the end be discovered, some time must elapse first. I have brought some of the garments I found in Felix's *store-room*; they will serve as a disguise for your highness. I have also provided a suit for myself, beside a small store of provisions, as perhaps we shall be forced to remain for at least a day or two in the vaults. Will your highness run this risk, or await here the fulfilment of a destiny your soul abhors?"

"I will run the chance of escaping by the means you propose. I can hardly be worse off than I am," replied Albert.

In effect, the attempt was made, and succeeded completely. The governor, perfectly unsuspecting of treachery, entered the prince's chamber, and had advanced nearly to his couch, round which the curtains were closely drawn, when he heard the door loudly slammed behind him, and then locked and bolted. He started.

"I am betrayed!" exclaimed he. "The prince will endeavour to escape, and I have no power to prevent him. Before I can alarm the fortress, he will doubtless have quitted it."

He rushed to the door, but all his efforts to open it were unavailing. He shouted as loud as he was able; no one came to his call. In fact, an hour elapsed before suspicion was excited at his unusual and lengthened absence; and by the time he was released from his confinement, the prince and his faithful guide were safely lodged in the little stone chamber, forming the last of a range immediately leading to the outlet.

On finding his worst fears realized, the governor had the castle strictly searched; no avenue was unguarded; the sentinels

were all at their posts, and to a man evidently guiltless of aiding the prince's evasion. In the utmost dismay at what had happened, the unfortunate governor sent an express to the palace to apprise the margrave with what had happened. This intelligence, so unlooked-for and so unwelcome, threw the court once more into the highest state of excitement, and the unhappy father into a new paroxysm of agonizing fears. Disbelieving the governor's statement, and fearing he was privy to the prince's escape, he ordered him into close confinement, till he (the margrave) had leisure to investigate the business more fully.

In the meantime, detached parties of soldiers scoured the country for miles around, in the hope of intercepting the prince, who it was imagined could not so soon have got beyond the reach of pursuit. But party after party returned unsuccessful, and the margrave, by the advice of his council, took other steps to discover and bring back the fugitive. While this was going on at the palace, the prince and Leon were await-



ing with impatience for the time to arrive when, without running much risk of detection, they might issue from their cheerless retreat. Two days had elapsed, and Albert determined, at all risks, to quit the vault when, favoured by darkness, they might be so unseen from the fortress. Fully equipped in the incongruous garments purloined from Felix's hoard, and possessed of a small portion of the provisions provided by Leon about midnight on the third night after their disappearance, they cautiously quitted their uncomfortable and dreary retreat. The night was very dark, therefore favourable to the fugitives; and they hastened onward, hoping to be far from B—— at the dawn of day. Their disguise was complete, that when the light became strong enough to show them to each other, they could not help laughing at the strange appearance they made. One of the prince's eyes was bandaged over; a large patch covered almost the whole of the opposite cheek; and when necessary, he was prepared to appear miserably lame. Leon's

equipment was equally grotesque : a pretty reasonably sized hump took off much from the height of his figure ; he had covered his own fair hair with a bushy black wig, and stained his face and hands a deep brown. In short, the margrave would not have known his own son, or the prince his valet, had each met the other, unapprized of his metamorphose. Leon was a tolerable musician, and to ensure a welcome from the peasants whose cottages they might find it necessary to enter, he had provided himself with an old violin which he found in Felix's store-room. Not exactly knowing the geography of the part of the country they were in, they kept as close to the banks of the river as possible, hoping that, ere the day closed whose dawn had just revealed them to each other, they might fall in with some of the wood-rafts constantly proceeding down the river, and from the navigators, who were generally peasants, they might beg assistance to further them on their way.

The fear of being overtaken or discovered lent wings to their steps, and ere the hour

of noon, they were many leagues from B—— As yet, they had seen no raft; and Albert began to despair of overtaking one before the short day closed in. Beside this, as their provision was exhausted, and in spite of being a lover, the prince could not help feeling the cravings of hunger. They had walked far; their breakfast had been a slight one, and the keen frosty air was every moment increasing the uneasy sensation they endured. For the last hour their path had led through tangled brushwood, making it fatiguing to penetrate. The prince became so exhausted that he found it difficult to proceed. Leon, greatly alarmed, requested him to sit down while he mounted a little neighbouring hillock, from whence he could perhaps, discover a cottage, in which they might rest and procure some food. Unwilling as Albert was to delay his flight, the languor he felt stealing over him obliged him to accede to the valet's advice, and throwing himself on the grass, he entreated Leon to put his plan into immediate execution. Hastily climbing the little eminence, the valet was

agreeably surprised to see, not far from him, a turn of the river, which had been for some time hid from their view by the thickness of the trees and undergrowth in that quarter. Wishing to reconnoitre the spot more closely, he rapidly descended on the other side, and on rounding a rock, came immediately in view of a small hut, apparently uninhabited; the door was open, and on peeping in, Leon discovered that it was filled with nets and other things appertaining to the occupation of a fisherman. Passing on towards the river, he was overjoyed to find a small boat secured to the stump of a tree. All was quiet around, not the slightest sound broke on the listener's ear.

"This is well," said he; "but it might have been better had a single soul appeared who could administer a trifle to our pressing wants. I will return to the prince, and assist him hither. We had better make use of this boat; he cannot walk much farther without food and rest; even the latter might enable him to get on."

So saying, he returned to Albert, who

by that time had in some degree recovered from his faintness, and rising with renewed hope, proceeded to the spot indicated by his companion. By the time they arrived at the hut, they could see, by a movement inside, that it was no longer without an inmate. An old man was quietly seated, a few paces within the door, mending a net. Leon was overjoyed.

"Courage, my beloved master!" said he in a whisper; "we shall get something to eat. You do not walk lame enough; sit more on your left leg, and do not get quite so fast."

The prince could not help smiling at Leon's advice, which he immediately followed; and by so doing, did not arrive at the little dwelling till his ready-witted companion had introduced himself to the fisherman, and made him fully understand the melancholy situation.

"It was a bad business for us, as you say," observed Leon, in reply to some remark of the old man's—"everything we had in the world taken from us, our good

clothes, and all. I do not mind so much for myself, but that poor boy, my brother, who was in hopes of establishing himself so well at Cologne; he is not able to walk further, as you may see; and how we are to get on, I cannot tell. If we could only reach Mannheim, we have an uncle there who would receive us, and no doubt provide for our pressing wants. But how we are to get there, I cannot tell. We have no money, and who will help us without it?"

The old man looked up from his work.

"May be I might," said he, "if I were sure your story was true; but what matter?—should it not, the sin will be yours, in telling me such a lie. Come along; my cottage is near by, my frau will give you something to eat, and then I will row you a little way down the river. A raft passed this, early last night; may be we shall overtake it. Come, come!—I have no time to waste. I must be at my work, or the good monks of St. Philip will have to fast in earnest. Come, come!"

The fisherman's manner was blunt, but

his words were kind, and the prince appeared to exert himself as much as possible to keep up with him. The cottage was not far distant, and no sooner had they entered it, than the old man desired his wife to give the poor travellers some food. The woman was not by many years so old as her husband, of whom she appeared to stand in great awe: without one word, she hastily brought forth such provisions as her cupboard afforded; that done, she retired, and did not again appear while the traveller remained. The food thus kindly afforded them was not very tempting, but hunger made it palatable, and they did ample justice to the repast. When their host saw they had eaten as much as they wished, he called to his wife, and told her, he was going away with his guests; he then turned to them, and with the usual "Come, come!" quitted the cottage. On arriving at the river's side he unfastened the boat, and after putting into it such tackle as he wanted, he whistled, and a lad immediately attended the summons. Where he sprang

from they could not imagine, nor, indeed, was it material to them to know. He entered the boat first, the fisherman then desired the travellers to embark, and last of all the old man got in himself. Everything was soon adjusted, and the boat, once put in motion, rapidly descended the river. It was evidently the fisherman's intention to overtake the raft, if possible; but after rowing nearly an hour, without coming in sight of it, he informed his passengers he must land them, as he could go no farther. He did so; and the prince and his attendant, after thanking the old man for his kindness, pursued their way once more on foot. The food and rest of which they had so lately partaken had invigorated them so much that they were enabled to proceed at a good pace, and hoping every moment to overtake the raft, their spirits rose in proportion as they left B—— behind them.

It was late in the day before they descried the raft gently floating down the river. Hope lent them wings, and in an



incredibly short space of time they came opposite to it, and as it was very near the shore, they found no difficulty in speaking to the people who were navigating it. Leon, as formerly, was the spokesman, and so well did he manage the business, that they were desirous to embark, and every means afforded by the unsuspicious peasant to give them easy entrance into the floating island. Leon's happy spirits, gay conversation, occasionally diversified with a song or a tune on his violin, so ingratiated him into the good graces of his new companions that they kindly supplied him and his companion's wants, and when they arrived at Mannheim, saw them depart with evident regret. It was not the intention of the fugitives to remain long in the town; they hastened, therefore, to seek the little inn kept by Frau Gotlob, to which one of the men on the raft had recommended them.

"You will find her disposed to be very charitable to you, though for that matter your music will be considered good payment for your entertainment. God speed you

friend!—may be we shall find you here on our return."

"Perhaps," was Leon's only reply; and with another kind adieu from the peasant, the raft proceeded on its voyage.

The humble inn which they sought was easily found, and the Frau Gotlob fully realized the character they had received of her. Previous, however, to entering the town, they had in a great measure thrown off their disguise: the prince no longer appeared blind and lame; Leon's figure had resumed its proportions; and indeed, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for their late friends of the fisherman's hut and raft to identify the two new inmates of Frau Gotlob's well-filled kitchen with the lame, blind, patched, though still shabbily-dressed prince, or with his no longer hunch-backed companion.

The evening passed merrily, for the fugitives thought it prudent to join in all that was going on; Leon honestly informing the hostess, that the exercise of his musical talents must be taken in remune-

ration for his own and his companion's entertainment. To this proposition the good frau, without the least hesitation, assented: she even hinted to Leon that the assembled worthies would willingly bestow some stivers, to further them on their journey next day.

After an evening spent in much rude jollity, the minstrel and his companion were permitted to retire to their respective bundles of straw. Fatigue acted upon the latter as a soporific, and in spite of the anxiety he was suffering, he slept soundly till the dawn of the following morning when the bustle pervading the household Frau Gotlob awoke him. Leon was already up, and awaiting his rising with no little impatience. He assured the prince no time was to be lost, and after a plain but good breakfast, the wanderers once more set out on their perilous journey, followed by the good wishes of the frau and of such of her guests of the preceding evening as still remained.

It would be as tedious as unnecessary to

proceed step by step with the travellers, as they retraced their way to Schwartzwald. They felt certain that every means would be taken to discover their retreat, and that in particular the neighbourhood of Romana would be strictly watched. The prince mentioned this circumstance to Leon, and the certain risk they would run in entering any house in its vicinity. He advised their lying concealed in some cave or thicket till he could ascertain if his lovely mistress were indeed confined there. A secret presentiment led him to imagine that Conradine was still at Romana—that she was again the inhabitant of the western tower. Should that be the case, he despaired not of gaining an interview with her by means of the entrance he had discovered during his residence in the castle. In pursuance of his plan of concealment, he and Leon entered a rocky defile to the south of the castle. The spot was as secluded as they could well wish for; several natural recesses, well shaded by brushwood, afforded them ample means of concealment. They had

taken the precaution to provide themselves with provisions at a small hamlet they had passed through, so that they could remain in their new home for several days without inconvenience on that score.

When they were established in their solitary and by no means safe abode, they divested themselves of their ragged apparel which had so effectually concealed their own clothes. The valet had selected his plainest dress previous to quitting the fortress, and the prince had assumed his peasant's dress, so that had they been seen, their present appearance would not have attracted observation or remark.

The steps that led to the western tower were time-worn, and in many places broken away; still night after night did Albert ascend them, in peril both of life and limb, in the fond hope of discovering the object of his search. Sanguine as were his hopes at first, repeated disappointment nearly reduced him to despair. Worked up almost to frenzy, he vowed, in the excitement of his feelings, (as for the fourth time he took

the path leading to Romana,) that if the attempt he was then about to make failed, he would change his mode of proceeding, and take other and more decided steps to discover Conradine's retreat. Having come to this determination, he approached the tower. The night was unusually dark, the hour long past midnight, and had it not been for the bright fitful glances of the aurora borealis, the heedless youth would have found it almost impossible to have gained the terrace in safety.

With his usual caution, however, he advanced, and as he rounded the angle of the tower, heard the evening hymn to the Virgin, chanted in the low sweet tones of a female voice. He started, stopped, bent eagerly forward, and then, convinced he was not mistaken, rushed forward towards the spot from whence the sounds proceeded, exclaiming—

“Conradine! my own, ever dear Conradine! have I at length found you?”

“Justin, is it indeed you?” cried the gentle being, rising and bounding towards

her lover. "Am I indeed so happy?" And then, not reflecting on the freedom of the action, she threw herself into his open arms, and felt herself pressed against his fond and beating heart.

"Oh, Conradine!" exclaimed the prince, first recovering the use of speech, "have I indeed found you? This is a happiness I have long sought for, and, the moment before I heard your dear voice, was nearly hopeless of obtaining."

"Did you know, then, that I was at Romana? I thought they would have kept that a profound secret."

"I heard it, dearest," replied the prince, "but not from those who sent you hither. Curse on the cruel policy that deems it prudent to divide us! But let us not waste the precious moments on indifferent and immaterial subjects: now I have found you, let me only speak of what is nearest my heart—of the first, the dearest wish I have on earth. With much difficulty and danger did I effect my escape from the power of my persecutors. On the wings of love have

I flown hither; for many days have I lingered in this vicinity—for many nights have I paced this terrace, in the anxious hope of seeing you; and now, that kind fortune has granted my ceaseless prayer, grant the only request I have to make—flee with me, and in some secluded dwelling constitute my happiness and ensure your own!”

“Alas! Justin, I dare not—your request is altogether improper. I have given the most solemn promises to Ernest and Pauline not even to hold converse with you. Leave me, then, and forget an unfortunate girl. Alas! fate interposes—we can never be united!”

“We must—we shall!” cried the prince, vehemently; “and as for extorted promises, they are nothing—less than nothing. My life depends on your complying with my desire—my only—my earnest request! Know, obdurate girl, that I never will survive your rejection of my proposal!”

“Oh, Justin!” cried the agitated girl—  
“torture me not with such horrid words.



You must indeed forget me: my future destiny is fixed unalterably. As soon as Pauline recovers from an illness caused by her late anxiety, we go to St. Sibald's, where, by the margrave's order, I am to take the veil."

"And is it thus coldly you speak of an event that must divide us for ever?" exclaimed the prince. "Cruel, cruel, unkind Conradine! So you mean to submit quietly to your horrid destiny, and leave me—me, whom you once said you loved above everything on earth, to black despair! But, by Heaven! you shall not go! Should I be a man, and suffer it? No! rather would I let them tear my heart from my bosom than permit them to sacrifice you, lovely as you are, to such a joyless existence. Come then, my own!—draw not back—forget the world and the tyrants it contains, and live alone for him who devotes himself to make you happy."

"Oh, plead not thus! Compel me not to appear cold and obdurate in your eyes—render not the sacrifice I have made to

duty too heavy to be borne!" said Conradine, in a gentle but firm voice, at least as firm as her fast-falling tears would permit her to use. "Alas! my poor heart was sufficiently sad before this trying interview—increase not its sufferings by your reproaches and complaints!"

"I am an unfeeling monster," cried the prince, "thus to afflict you, gentle being! but make some allowance for my feelings—my despair. Yet would you have me resign the hope of calling you mine? No, no!—I must see you again, reason with you, and, finally, convince you. Meet me to-morrow night: I shall then be prepared with much stronger arguments to meet your objections, and prove their fallacy. Promise me, dear Conradine—the morning dawns; I dare not remain at present, for fear of being seen."

"No, Justin," replied the weeping girl, "I cannot, will not promise you. I am innocent of design in this interview; but were I to grant you another, I should violate my promise to my benefactors, and make

them also guilty in the eyes of their sovereign. Leave me, then, Justin, to my fate, and forget if possible one who has innocently worked you so much woe!"

"I obey, madam," said the prince, in a smothered voice. "It is plain you have ceased to love me. Fulfil your duty, and close your heart for ever to my claims. Be happy, and think not of the misery of one who can never, while life lasts, forget you."

"You will kill me, Justin, if you take thus," said Conradine, taking his hand and gently pressing it, while her warm tears fell fast upon it. "You must know better than I do why our union is forbidden; therefore you should not blame me for what I cannot help. My heart is still and ever will remain the same; but no consideration on earth shall induce me to break my promise to my only friends. Exert yourself, and suffer not a weak girl to evince more resolution than you do. Doubtless you have duties to fulfil, and those high ones, and if you perform them well, you will meet your reward in a better world than this."

“Kind and cruel! you force me to love you better than I ever did—even at the very moment you drive me from you for ever. Oh, Conradine, my heart is wrung! I go, but I cannot say adieu!—that would seem like parting with you for ever; and I would still fain think we may meet again.”

A short agonized pressure of her unre-sisting form to his heart accompanied these words, and in the next moment the prince was descending, with reckless steps, the broken stairs of the tower.

What passed in the minds of the lovers at this melancholy parting cannot be described. Conradine, with an aching heart, sought her chamber, supported only by the consciousness of having sacrificed every thing to duty; and Albert, oppressed with an incurable sadness, wandered into the forest, careless as to his future fate. Instinct rather than premeditation led him towards the spot he had chosen for his retreat, and just as he was about to enter the recess, he was met by Leon.

“Heaven be praised! your highness is

come!" cried that honest fellow, with infinite exultation. "I have been anxiously expecting you for the last hour."

"Indeed!" responded Albert, in an absent tone, throwing himself, as he spoke, on a rough stone that served him for both chair and couch.

"Are you not well, my lord prince?" exclaimed Leon, in alarm.

"Alas! well in body, but sick at heart. Yet why do I complain?—nought now on earth can minister to my disease!" replied the prince, mournfully. "I am miserable, good Leon—most miserable! I have been blessed with an interview with my Conrardine, only to lose her for ever. She absolutely refuses to quit Romana with me; she patiently acquiesces in the cruel wishes of her oppressors. We have parted—do I live to utter the word?—for ever!"

"Say not so, dear master!" cried Leon. "I have tidings that I trust will change your present sadness into joy, and cause your lovely lady to listen to your wishes; in short, I have become privy to a plot,

which it must be your highness' business to circumvent."

Struck with Leon's words, and roused by new-born hopes out of an inert and gloomy reverie, Albert entreated him to explain himself, which while he is doing, it is necessary I should go back in the story to that time when the lovely Conradine and her maternal friend appeared before the *mar-grave*.

END OF VOL. I.



**THE ASTROLOGER:**

**A LEGEND OF THE BLACK FOREST.**

**VOL. II.**





# THE ASTROLOGER :

## A LEGEND OF THE BLACK FOREST.

BY A LADY.

What is't ? a spirit ?  
Lord, how it looks about ! Believe me, Sir,  
It carries a brave form :—But 'tis a spirit.

I might call him  
A thing divine ; for nothing natural  
I ever saw so noble.

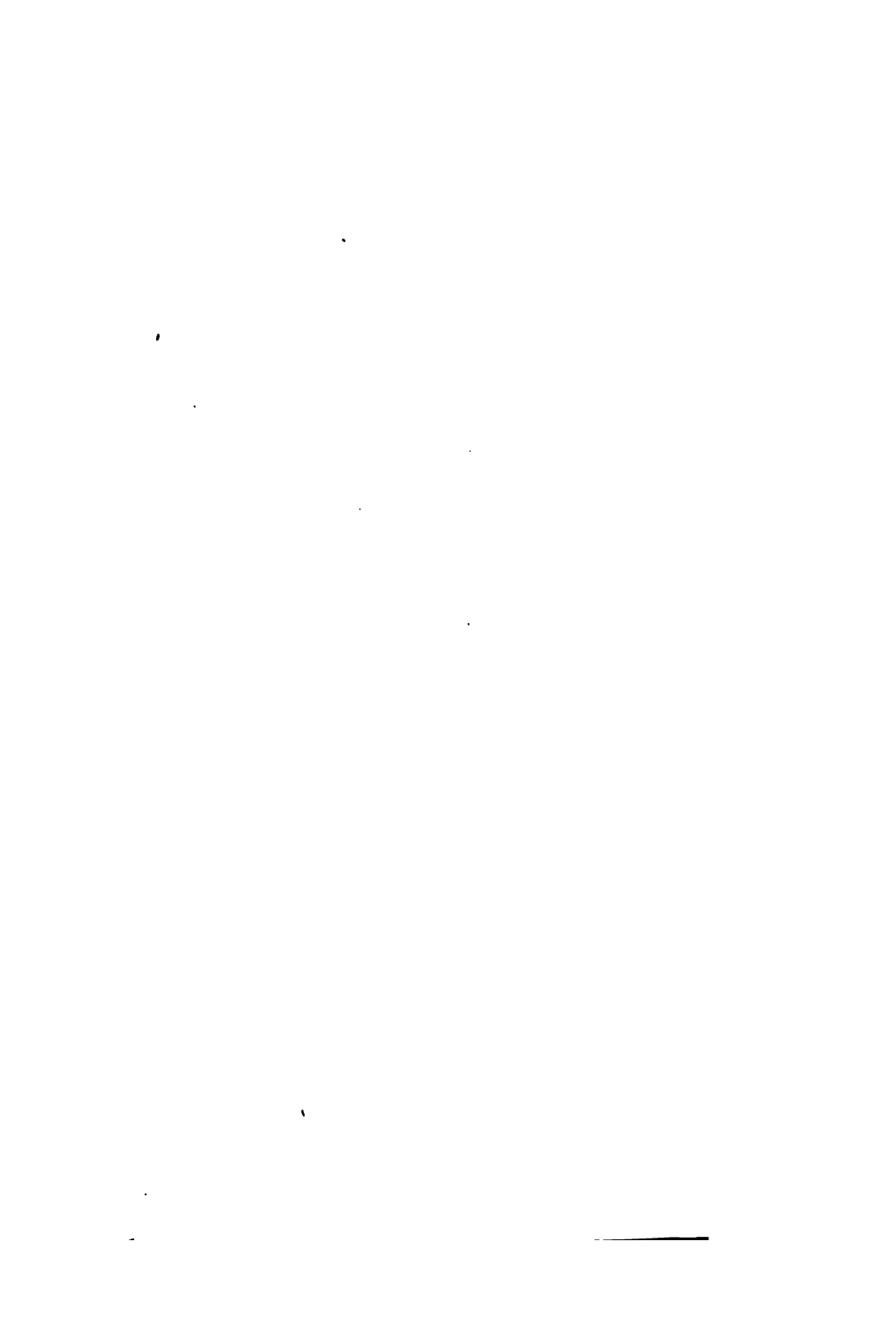
And by my prescience  
I find my zenith doth depend upon  
A most auspicious star ; whose influence  
If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes  
Will ever after droop.

TEMPEST.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON  
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.  
1846.



THE ASTROLOGER :  
A LEGEND OF THE BLACK FOREST.

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PART THE SEVENTH.

“ Now yield thee, or by Him who made  
The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade !”

“ She is the loveliest maid  
That ever heir'd a crown.”

IN her progress to the presence-chamber, more than one admiring eye had rested on Conradine's blushing face; but only one had dared to carry his views farther than a little transient admiration : that *one* was the bold, turbulent, and daring Cosmas de Konisburgh ; a man who scarcely deigned to

acknowledge a superior, and who certainly in vice had no equal. The consideration of the prince's love, and prior claims, might and no doubt would have deterred a less determined man than the count from nourishing hopes; but no consideration, however powerful, no ties, however sacred, ever came between him and the gratification of his lawless wishes. He was determined to possess Conradine; and from the moment he beheld her, he never ceased to form schemes for the accomplishment of his base views.

The fear of offending him, rather than esteem or approbation, induced the margrave to keep the count near his person; and the same motive influenced Herman to consent to his wishes, when, with little ceremony, the count demanded the hand of the fair captive. The house of de Konigsburgh was powerful, and, with such a head, was rather to be propitiated than provoked. The margrave, however, ventured to sug-

gest that a village maiden was scarcely a meet partner for a count of Konisburgh.

“I am not fastidious,” was the count’s blunt reply. “Thy son, my prince, thought the maiden meet for his illustrious bed; and why should I look higher than my prince? Beside, the house of Konisburgh can well afford to have its rank blood thinned a little: it grows over rich.”

So saying, he turned unceremoniously on his heel; and several days elapsed ere he renewed his suit. When, however, he again spoke of his wishes to his sovereign, he was no longer repulsed: his proposals were favourably listened to; and he was finally empowered to proceed to Romana, and demand Conradine from her guardian, the baron. One promise was, however, extorted from him, and to which he pledged his knightly word—that, ere he bore the maiden from the castle, he would wed her in the presence of the baron, and never, on

any pretence, bring her within the precinct of the court.

The margrave hoped by this arrangement to keep Cosmas steady in his allegiance, and at the same time cut off all the prince's future hopes. But the best devised plans of man are often baffled, even in the very moment of their completion; and happily for Conradine, at the very time when she seemed given up by her fellow beings to misery and shame, the hand of a kind and merciful Providence was stretched forth to snatch her from a fate far worse than the cruellest death.

Cosmas, eager to possess the beautiful girl on whom he had set his lawless wishes, proceeded without loss of time to Romana, attended only by three followers. He expected no resistance from the baron, although it was far from his intention to fulfil his promise to his sovereign, and marry Conradine. He was fully prepared

to impose on Romana by a feigned tale, and the margrave's signet, which he bore, was to aid him in his perfidy. Arriving at the castle, he announced himself his prince's envoy, empowered to demand the younger female prisoner from the baron. He suppressed the margrave's letter to Romana, explaining the count's wishes and intentions, and in its place substituted a composition of his own, well calculated to further his base views and impose on the loyal and single-hearted Romana. The baron, though he questioned not the authenticity of the document, could not help, in his heart, condemning his sovereign for the step he had taken.

"If it had been his pleasure to remove Conradine from my care," said he to Pauline, "could he not, in all his court, have selected one more fitting to be her guardian than the licentious de Konisburgh? I tremble to place her in his



hands, yet I dare not disobey the positive order I have received. Alas! what shall I do?—how fulfil my duty to my prince, and save our child from the power of that ruffian?

Pauline, though participating in all her brother's fears, knew not how to advise him; her heart was wrung, and she wept in silence. In the meantime, de Konisburgh urged speed, and hinted that in the event of any unnecessary delay he must proceed to force, as his sovereign's orders were peremptory. Such was the state of affairs in the castle, when his confidential domestic, Rolfe, encountered Leon in the forest on that memorable night in which Prince Albert parted (as he thought for ever) from his beloved Conradine.

“Leon!” “Rolfe!” were the mutual exclamation of these two worthies, on meeting.

“Is the wind in that quarter?” said the latter, laughing. “So, my good brother, you are here!—how fares it with you? This

forest is famous for good game—prithee what sport?”

“Pshaw!” exclaimed Leon. “What folly! Can you, Rolfe, never be serious? but what, in the name of all the saints, brings *you* hither?”

“The same errand that brought you, worthy kinsman,” replied Rolfe—“the bright eyes of a village maiden.”

“That, to me?” said Leon, angrily. “What, then, becomes of poor Magdeline?”

“Pish! you are dull, brother,” answered Rolfe. “My master, the count, is in love—actually in love, for the nine hundred and ninety-ninth time. But listen: you know full well that I have a great esteem for you, Leon: you were my friend when I had no other. You love your master—he is worthy of the duty you show him. I know the state of his heart, and would rather see him happy than any man I know, save myself and your highness; but if Cosmas succeeds

in his present views, adieu to Prince Albert's hopes—they are rivals, man !”

Leon was naturally much astonished at this information, and entreated an explanation, which Rolfe hastened to give him ; but, as the reader is already acquainted with the particulars narrated by the count's *confidant*, I shall spare him the repetition, and take up the story nearly where Rolfe laid it down.

“ You may depend on what I tell you. The baron has yielded an unwilling consent, and the count bears off his prize to-morrow.”

“ Base villain !” exclaimed Albert, who had listened to Leon with highly-excited feelings—“ base villain ! and is my innocent, lovely Conradine, to become thy prey ?”

“ Far from it, my dear lord,” replied Leon. “ Chance, or rather let me say, a kind Providence, has sent one I can confide in, to warn and befriend us. Rolfe hates Cosmas for his tyranny, and the black designs he

harboured against his wife, and would have long since left him, if he dared; but to the point. This morning, two horses, fully appointed, will await us near the ruin to the west of the castle. At ten, Cosmas quits Romana with his prize: instead of proceeding towards B——, as he has told the baron he intends, he takes an opposite direction, meaning to throw himself into his castle, on the borders of Bavaria, where he thinks he can defy his sovereign's indignation, and hold possession of his prize, in defiance of authority, threats, or entreaties."

Rage flashed from Albert's eyes as he listened to Leon, and a bitter, deadly oath passed his lips, to be revenged on the cowardly ravisher.

"I would proclaim him to the world what he is!" exclaimed the indignant youth, "I would hasten to the castle, and denounce him to Romana, if by that means I could ensure the hand of my angelic mistress;

but, alas! I should only be throwing myself into the jaws of danger, without saving Conradine from the power of the count. No, Leon! I will follow your advice: we will leave this neighbourhood instantly, and lay in wait for Cosmas at the spot indicated by your brother-in-law. God will aid a good cause, and this hand shall deal destruction on the unmanly oppressor of beauty and innocence."

So saying, the prince quitted the cave, followed by Leon, and as the morning was now well advanced, they proceeded to the ruin, where they found, as promised, two good horses fully caparisoned, a couple of swords, and two large cloaks. The prince expressed his gratitude to Rolfe, as he and his companion girt on their weapons; they lost no time in mounting, being anxious to be at the place of concealment in good time, and ere Cosmas and his party had quitted Romana, they were in readiness to intercept

him, and awaited his appearance with no small degree of impatience. I will not pause to describe the agony of the parting scene between Romana, Pauline, and their beloved charge, or repeat the injunctions which the former gave de Konisburgh, to be careful of his trust and loyal to his confiding prince. Oaths cost the count nothing, and on this occasion he was not sparing of them. His savage heart bounded with a cruel joy, as he placed the shrinking, almost fainting girl on her horse, and waving his hand to the baron, gave the word to his party, and in the next moment they had crossed the drawbridge.

“On!” cried Cosmas; and turning to Rolfe, who held the bridle of the maiden’s horse, said, in an under tone—“Remember my orders, and on your life obey them.”

Rolfe bowed, and nothing more was said by any of the party.

After clearing the thickest of the wood

north of the castle, the count changed his route, and proceeded almost in an opposite direction, keeping always a little to the east. Had Conradine remarked this manœuvre, her ignorance of the road would have prevented her feeling any new alarm; as it was, she was plunged into the deepest distress, and never did her eye rest on Cosmas without producing a sensation of disgust and affright she could hardly support or conceal.

After nearly two hours' riding, the travellers entered a thicket of stunted oak trees, out of which four roads or broad tracks diverged. The count was about to pursue the one leading to the left, when two men, well mounted, rode furiously forward, sword in hand, calling loudly on him to surrender the lady.

"Base churls!" exclaimed de Konisburgh, (for the men wore the garb of peasants,) "are ye mad? Begone, slaves! and molest me not."

“ We are neither churls nor slaves, as you shall find—coward and spoiler as you are !” exclaimed the foremost of the horsemen; and without more ado, he made a furious thrust at the count, which, fortunately for him, he contrived to parry.

Astonished, but not daunted, Cosmas rallied, and calling loudly to Rolfe, ordered him to ride forward with the female, and place her in safety till he had chastised the insolence of his assailant; then wheeling round and drawing his sword, a furious combat ensued.

The combat was almost entirely confined to the count and the stranger; the two followers of the former at first made a show of attacking the companion of the latter, but after a few passes, they seemed by mutual consent to decline further contention, and became to all appearance quiet spectators of the fierce and obstinate combat between their principals.



First one and then the other gained the advantage; both fought desperately. Skill seemed on the side of Cosmas—native, fearless courage, on that of his opponent. At length fortune seemed inclined to favour the count. He had nearly succeeded in disarming his antagonist; but while he struggled to wrest the sword from his grasp, the stranger drew his dagger, and making a lunge, planted it in Cosmas' shoulder. The exquisite torture inflicted by the weapon forced the count to let go his hold; and the stranger retreating a little, inquired if his adversary were satisfied, and willing to resign the lady.

"Never!" was de Konisburgh's brief reply; and plucking the dagger from his shoulder, where it had stuck, once more advanced to the contest. The smart of his wound not a little increased his native ferocity, and he now fought more like a demon than a mortal man. The count's

blind and indiscriminating fury evidently gave his opponent the advantage, and he seemed well inclined to use it, but just at the moment when he attempted to unhorse de Konisburgh, the latter aimed a blow at his head, which he partly avoided, but not altogether : the broad leather straps by which his cap was fastened under his chin, and by which his face had been almost entirely concealed, were cut in twain, the covering fell off, and the features of Prince Albert were revealed. Cosmas started, but not in alarm ; he knew the prince was his rival, and that conviction added much to his malignancy.

“ Die, rash boy ! ” cried he ; “ this is the hour of doom ! Astrologers spoke truly, when they said Schwartzwald would be fatal to you.”

“ Insolent, disloyal boaster ! ” exclaimed Albert—“ Recreant to honour ! false to thy knightly vows !—perish ! ”

So saying, the prince darted forward, and ere Cosmas could recover his seat or parry the well-aimed thrust, the sword of Albert had entered his body, and, with a deep groan the count fell to the ground.

Waiting not to observe whether he was dead or only wounded, Albert clapped spurs to his horse, and, followed by Leon, rode furiously away, taking the path Rolfe had chosen when he appeared to obey his lord's order. In about the space of ten or fifteen minutes, during which the riders had used the utmost speed, they came to a little dingle, and were immediately joined by a horseman, who had evidently been watching for them, or at least for somebody.

"Is all well?" inquired he.

"For us, but not for the count; he is desperately wounded, perhaps dead," replied the prince. Hasten to him, while we pursue our way. Is the lady safe?"

"Perfectly," replied Rolfe, "but suffering

deep distress. Poor lamb! her terror is extreme; but your welcome presence will reassure her. When we next meet, I trust I shall see your highness in peace and happiness."

Albert sighed—"Alas! worthy Rolfe, I fear my troubles are not over: however, rest assured your disinterested services shall never be forgotten. Take this ring, as a guarantee of my sincerity, and I trust one day to redeem it in a manner that shall convince you how highly I prize the service you have this day done me."

Rolfe took the ring, bowed profoundly to the prince, and pointing towards the spot where he had concealed Conradine, rode back to the scene of the late combat.

With trembling anxiety, Albert took the direction thus given him, well understanding its purport, and on turning the point of an irregular crag, beheld the object of his love seated on the grass; her face

was bent down, and concealed from view by her spread hands. The noise which the prince made, though he tried to advance with as little as possible, alarmed the maiden; she looked up, her features all disordered by extreme agitation. For a moment she gazed on the intruder—in the next she was in his arms.

“Justin! Justin!” was all she could utter. Her head sank on his shoulder, and for several moments she was speechless.

The prince in the meantime used every assurance, every tender entreaty, which his romantic passion dictated, to dispel her alarm and give her that degree of self-possession so necessary in the present exigence. At length he succeeded, and she was able to listen to the explanation he thought it proper to give her. When he had concluded, she sunk from his supporting arms, and kneeling, thanked Heaven and him for her providential rescue. This act

of grateful piety performed, she rose, and gave the prince to understand she was able to accompany him. Assisted by Leon, she was placed on her horse, which was tied to a neighbouring tree, and they proceeded without further delay on a journey which had rather chance than design for its guide.

In the meantime, Rolfe regained the spot where his wounded lord still lay, though no longer insensible, his first sensation of faintness having passed away. The sight of Rolfe, without the maiden, threw the count into a paroxysm of passion, and he roundly accused the man of treachery.

“Say that word again, and, by Heaven! you shall repent it,” replied the domestic, alighting. “In your present situation, you would do well not to provoke me.”

Cosmas seemed to cower beneath some secret fear, for he replied not; and Rolfe gave orders to the other attendants to con-

struct a litter, on which they might remove the count to the nearest house, if any such could be found in the neighbourhood. After, however, a strict search, not even the meanest hovel could be discovered, and de Konisburgh said he thought he could manage to sit his horse and slowly retrace his way to Romana. This he accordingly did, and after a painful ride of four hours (for so long did it take him to retrace what it had scantily taken him two, before he was wounded, to accomplish) once more crossed the drawbridge of the castle, but with widely different feelings from those he experienced in the early part of the day, when, exulting in successful villany, he rode proudly forth, waving a courteous adieu to the abused and heart stricken Romana.

Hardly had the count entered on the subject of his recent discomfiture to the baron, when a shrill blast from the horn at

the gate announced other claimants for admission; and in the next moment a body of armed men rode into the court, the leader of which, advancing to Romana, raised his beaver, and was greeted by him with a cordial welcome.

“Count Saarsden,” said the baron, “is always welcome to my castle; but may I ask why he wears such a hostile guise, and why he is followed by such a numerous force?”

“In a few brief words you shall be answered, my lord,” replied the count. “You must know the prince has once more eluded his sire’s vigilance, and it is the opinion of every one that his foolish and most absurd passion for that village girl has brought him hither.”

“It has! it has!” exclaimed de Konisburgh, interrupting Count Saarsden. “I was just about to mention the strange affair to the Lord Romana, when you ar-



rived. Behold these wounds!—the hand of Prince Albert inflicted them. He waylaid me in the forest, set on me, without provocation, used the most insulting language, wounded me as you see, and, finally, bore off the female I had in charge: at least so I conclude; for that fellow yonder, to whose care I confided her during the encounter, and who bore her out of sight of the fray, returned alone, and I was then too weak to question him.—Rolfe!” cried the count, turning sharply round—“where is the lady I confided to your care?”

“I know not,” replied the man, boldly.

“Know not?” reiterated the count—“but that is impossible. You cannot think to satisfy me with such an answer.”

“With deference to your lordship, I can give no other,” replied Rolfe, doggedly. “I took the lady to the safest place I could find, and placing her on the grass, left her for a brief interval; when I returned, she was gone.”

“Thou liest, varlet!” exclaimed Cosmas—  
“thou knowest that thou dost!” and shall  
answer at a more convenient season for thy  
negligence.—It is plain, my lords,” continued  
he, turning to Romana and Saarsden, “that  
the prince is in possession of the girl, and it  
is not yet too late to recover her, and secure  
him. Five hours have hardly elapsed since  
we fought. Direct your course east, count,  
and doubtless you will overtake them.”

“East!” exclaimed Romana, “I thought  
you were going south, my lord?”

Cosmas coloured to the eyes, and pre-  
tending to suffer acutely from his wound,  
motioned to enter the castle ; while Saars-  
den, profiting by his hint, took a hasty  
leave of Romana, and rode briskly from the  
castle.

I must now leave the count to pursue his  
way, and return to the lovers, who were  
using every endeavour to quit the terri-  
tories of B——. The day was already far

advanced, and Conradine, unused to riding, became less able every moment to pursue her journey. Still she would not complain, Leon spoke of a neighbouring village, which he thought must be near at hand, and the hope of being soon there kept up her courage. Many a weary mile was, however, traversed, ere the blue ascending smoke greeted her view. At length a joyful exclamation from the prince, and the barking of several dogs at one and the same time met her ear, and right glad was she to quit her horse for the shelter of a rude mud cabin, where little was to be procured but a defence from the night air, and a truss of straw for a bed. In this abode, however, the travellers managed to pass the night—Conradine, with the mistress of the house, in an interior chamber; the prince, Leon, and the male inhabitants of the hut, together with the horses, in the outward apartment. The night passed without dis-

turbance, and with the first dawn, after partaking of a homely breakfast, the travellers, much refreshed, once more set forth on their journey. By this time the prince had decided on what steps to pursue; all he dreaded was Conradine's inability to take so long a journey. But, said he, reconciling the matter to himself as well as he could—"We shall soon be out of B——, and then we can travel slower, and even procure a horse-litter in some of the towns we must pass through: without it, I fear, poor Conradine could never take so long a journey. Yes," said he, musing, "it must be nearly two hundred miles to Klattau; but when once there, we shall be safe. On the affection of Charles I can rely: I will throw myself on his mercy, he will grant us an asylum, till I can propitiate my father.

The above soliloquy will explain the prince's intentions: he had resolved to put his cousin's friendship to the test, and with that

view was shaping his course for Bohemia. But the progress he made in his journey was not at all commensurate with his wishes: his lovely companion drooped, and evidently suffered extremely from fatigue; his strong desire, therefore, to quit the immediate neighbourhood of his father's territories was obliged to yield to imperious necessity, and before the second day was half spent, he perceived, with extreme dismay, that it would be impossible to journey farther without giving Conradine some rest, or, at least, changing the mode of her conveyance. They had crossed both the Neckar and the Starzel, and were only a league from the small principality of Hohenzallern, and great was his objection to enter a populous town; yet he was constrained to do so, and three hours past mid-day the travellers drew up at the only house of public entertainment Hechingen contained. By this time Conradine was completely subdued;

she could no longer conceal her weariness, which actually amounted to indisposition; and when her lover attended, to lift her from her horse, she sunk nearly insensible into his arms.

Albert no longer thought of the peril to which he was exposed; he only thought of Conradine and her accommodation, and, assisted by Leon, bore the fainting girl into the kitchen of the inn. This smoky apartment was already full of guests, and the prince shrank from the idea of exposing his lovely young mistress to the gaze of idle curiosity. He therefore drew the mistress of the house aside, and conjured her to give him a private chamber. The hostess assured him she had not such a thing.

“Every room I can spare is occupied,” said she. “We were hardly ever so full; the fair has brought so many guests, that it is quite impossible to accommodate you.”

“Alas!” exclaimed the prince, “what

shall I do? Behold the situation of that poor young woman! Let her have some place to herself, even if it be only a loft and a truss of straw—I can reward you well—do, my good mother! for the sake of Him who took pity on the houseless and fatherless.”

At the same time he slipped several ducats into her hand. Moved by his money more than by his earnest entreaties, the hostess made a sign of compliance, and led the way to a miserable chamber, which she called her own. At another time, Albert would have scorned such a sordid hole, and shrunk from placing the delicate form of Conradine on such a bed; but now, even a much worse (were that indeed possible) would have appeared in his eyes inestimable luxuries, and, with many expressions of gratitude, he laid his beloved burden on the mean couch. The hostess then took her leave, bidding her liberal guest call freely for whatever he wanted, assuring

him her house was the best in the principality, not only for choice wines and ales, but also for good cookery. The prince, willing to keep the dame in good humour, desired Leon to order supper, while he remained with the languid invalid, chafing her cold forehead, and whispering words of hope and comfort. By degrees his unabated care met its reward, and by the time Leon arrived with the supper, she was able to sit up, and, tenderly attended by her anxious lover, partake of some of the roast partridge, a brace of which smoked on a bright pewter dish, and certainly did not give the lie to the hostess' boast, that her house was celebrated for good cookery, and no less excellent wine.

When their repast was over, Albert and Leon retired, leaving the weary girl to repose.

"I shall remain very near you, love," was the prince's parting assurance, as he



slowly quitted the chamber, and the eyes of Conradine remained long fixed on the door that shut him from her view.

Rolled in their travelling cloaks, the prince and his attendant stretched themselves across the doorway, to guard the fair inmate of the hostess' chamber from intrusion, and though it was hardly the seventh hour of the evening they soon fell into a profound repose.

Hour followed hour, and by degrees everything became quiet in the inn. The valet snored aloud, and Albert was no longer disturbed by the perplexities which attended his waking thoughts. Soft slumbers had stolen over the senses of Conradine; in short, all beneath the roof of the active mistress of the "Prince of Hechingen" (for so the inn was called) enjoyed a temporary oblivion of their cares. The rats and mice alone were stirring; and had not fatigue proved a powerful soporific, their presence

must have proved both unwelcome and inconvenient to the slumberers on the floor.

This state of things was not, however, meant to last, not even till the midnight hour. The repose of the house was suddenly and violently disturbed; loud and repeated knocks sounded on the gate, followed by vociferous demands for admission, uttered in a tone of authority which those within thought it imprudent to dispute.

In the midst of the clamour, Conradine and her guards awoke; the former, in an agony of terror, quitted her bed, and hardly knowing what she did, rushed forth, calling on the name of Justin, her beloved Justin! Leon, in the meantime, descended the stairs, or rather ladder, to ascertain the cause of the commotion. Soon, too soon, alas! the fatal truth burst upon him: they had been traced—the margrave's soldiers, assisted by the civil magistrates of Hechingen, were already in the house, and a strict search was

about to commence. Panting for breath, the honest creature rushed back to the loft, and meeting the prince at the door, rather uncereimoniously pushed him back into the chamber.

“Retire, retire!” cried he—“they come! For the love of God, hide yourselves!—but, alas! you cannot. Oh, my dear, my gracious master, you will be discovered!—all, all is lost! You cannot, in this vile hole, (even for a moment,) conceal yourself—you will be seized, and dragged hence by the strong arm of power!”

The unhappy Conradine, who had followed the steps of her lover, and heard but too well what Leon said, was struck with horror, and hardly knowing what to dread, she uttered a loud scream, and fell lifeless into the arms of the agonized prince. Careless of everything but the situation of her he loved, the distracted Albert bore her fainting form back into the chamber, laid

her on the bed, and supported her head on his bosom. He chafed her temples—he unbuttoned the collar of her vest, to give her air—he called on her to awake; but, alas! she still continued to all appearance dead. Her face was pale and cold, and her fine hair, falling from the band that had hitherto bound it up, flowed over her faultless form.

“Fly, Leon, and bring succour to this angel!” cried the prince. “Oh, she will die, if something is not quickly done for her!”

Leon was preparing to obey, when the chamber was suddenly filled with armed men, and the hated form of Count Saarsden once more met the indignant eyes of Albert. The prince drew his sword.

“Count,” said he, “once I yielded to you, but now I will die first! Strike! strike! we will die together.”

The count, notwithstanding this speech, advanced.

“ My prince,” cried he, “ twice has the unpleasant task of arresting you devolved on me. Submit quietly, let me entreat you, and spare me the painful necessity of using force. You may perceive I am well attended; I——”

“ Peace!” exclaimed Albert. “ I warn you, count, to beware—the first man that approaches me, dies!”

The count, unmindful of this threat, advanced; happily, no fatal consequences followed his temerity; but a dreadful scene of tumult ensued, in the midst of which a voice, in an authoritative tone, exclaimed—“ *Forbear!*” and a form of unusual majesty advanced into the crowd. The stranger neither used violence nor threats, but he succeeded in establishing peace. With courteous freedom, he addressed himself to Count Saarsden, and demanded, in the voice of one apparently used to command, the cause of such an unusual clamour. The

count eyed his interrogator, but made no reply. The stranger then turned to the intrepid Albert, who was standing on the defensive—a drawn sword in his right hand, while he supported on his left arm the insensible Conradine. The pacificator's attention was forcibly arrested—first, by the fine, but inflamed face of Albert; then, by the pale and fixed features of Conradine. Not long, however, did he pursue the scrutiny: his whole countenance underwent a powerful change; he uttered a loud exclamation, rushed forward, pronouncing the name of “Hermangarde!” Albert was lost in astonishment: he hardly knew what to think; he would have repulsed the intruder, but the intruder was not to be repulsed. He gazed fondly but mournfully on the pale face of Conradine, and shaking his head, said, in a very low voice—

“Too young—too young! She cannot be *my* Hermangarde!”

Still he did not withdraw his gaze. The prince felt his lovely burden move—he raised her drooping head—he called upon her by name. She heard the tender appeal—she opened her eyes—she looked around; but the sight of so many strange faces alarmed her, and, like a timid child, she sought to hide her head in the bosom of her beloved supporter. This sudden action displaced her dress: a chain, with some trinkets attached to it, fell from her bosom; every eye in the circle rested on the glittering baubles, but no eye seemed to recognise them, save the stranger's. He started: pale and red by turns, he trembled violently, he gasped for breath, and in scarcely intelligible accents, conjured the timid girl to inform him how she became possessed of them.

“I have been told,” said she, blushing, and looking down, “that a mother's dying hand fastened them round my neck.”

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"Oh, name that mother!" exclaimed the stranger, passionately—"name her—name her!"

"Hermangarde!" replied the innocent and bewildered Conradine.

The stranger uttered a cry of joy, and falling on his knees, raised his eyes to Heaven, and for some moments seemed absorbed in silent prayer. He then arose, and turning to the astonished prince, said—

"You must return to B——."

"*Must*," exclaimed Albert, eyeing the speaker proudly; "and who are *you* that dare use that imperative phrase to *me*?"

"It matters not," was the reply; "but if you value your own happiness, you will not question my right. I am well disposed to be your friend." Then turning to Count Saarsden, he said—"I would speak a few words with you, my lord, in private."

The perplexed count mechanically followed the stranger, while the prince and



Conradine remained motionless and absorbed in the most perplexing astonishment.

In less than a quarter of an hour, the count and his companion re-entered the chamber. Frowns no longer rested on the brow of Saarsden; he approached the prince and his fair companion with extreme respect, saying,

“Your highness will please to return with me to B——. I pledge my honour that nothing hostile to your love shall result from your compliance.”

“Nothing—nothing!” reiterated the stranger. “And as a proof of the count’s assertion, you shall not be separated from the lady. She shall travel in your company and mine to B——, and I would fain trust the result of our journey will be most prosperous.”

Still Albert hesitated. He gazed on Conradine, and trembled. He could scarcely support the idea of throwing her again into the margrave’s power.

“ I am unknown to you,” said the stranger, “ and at present I must remain so ; but as you bear the character of extreme candour and generosity, take my assurances on trust, and believe that I am much, very much indeed, interested in your happiness, and also that the step I now recommend is the only one that can ensure it. You are fully aware that Count Saarsden is an honourable man. Will you accept him as the guarantee of my sincerity?”

“ I acknowledge the count to be an honourable man,” replied the prince ; “ but I also know that he is devoted to my father, and I feel assured he would sacrifice much to serve his master.”

“ Everything, prince, but my honour !” exclaimed the count ; “ *that* I would not forfeit even for my sovereign, much as I revere him. I pledge myself that this lady,” turning to Conradine, “ shall not be separated from your highness ; more I can-

not, dare not say. Go with me to B——, and I trust you will have no reason to reproach me with having betrayed you."

Bewildered and irresolute, Albert still continued silent. Conradine whispered softly—

"Go, my prince—go!"

"And resign you?—No, dear, but cruel girl! I cannot consent to throw you again into the power of your inveterate foe."

"Something, however, must be done, and done quickly," said the count, impatiently. "I cannot thus delay my return to B——. It gives me extreme pain to urge your highness, but my duty to my sovereign compels me. You must either go willingly, or——"

"Name not the alternative, on your peril!" cried Albert, starting from his seat. "I will go of my own free will; not even a finger of you, or your band, shall coerce me—and you my, Conradine, you shall bear me

company. Come weal, come woe! we will not be separated. Lead on, my lord! My servant is included in the treaty?"

"He is," replied the count.

Conradine, supported on the arm of her lover, and no longer ignorant of his real rank, trembled to reflect on the trials she might have to encounter, in consequence of the margrave's justly excited indignation.

"No wonder," thought she, "he wished to separate us; no wonder Pauline and Ernest were so averse to encourage everything like hope. Alas! instead of consenting to flee with the prince, when he succeeded in rescuing me from that horrid de Konisburgh, I ought to have returned to Romana. What will they think of me? And, oh, may Heaven forbend that my imprudence should involve them in my punishment!"

With very little hope, and much real anxiety, the unfortunate lovers entered the

vehicle that was waiting to receive them. The stranger entered with them, the door was closed, and the cavalcade took the road to B——, leaving the landlady of *the Prince of Hechingen* lost in astonishment at the strange scene she had witnessed, but by no means dissatisfied with the liberality of her mysterious guests.

The journey, as it may be supposed, was not a very pleasant one. Little or no conversation passed between the prince and the stranger. Conradine was uniformly silent, except, indeed, when by a low monosyllable she replied to some tender inquiry on the part of Albert, who continued to support her, and, from time to time, to address some consolatory assurance or some vague hope which his own sinking heart refused to credit. At length, morning dawned, and by degrees the stranger and Albert fell into conversation. The former took no small pains to render himself agreeable, and the

prince, won by his assiduity, felt it impossible to persevere in his reserve, or repel advances made in such a kind and conciliating manner. About the eighth hour of the morning, they stopped to breakfast; and during the meal nothing could exceed the respectful attention which both the stranger and Count Saarsden paid Conradine. This circumstance could not fail to attract Albert's notice; but, far from being agreeable to him, it aroused a feeling very like jealousy in his breast, and he did all in his power to render such assiduity for the future unnecessary. After a rest of two hours, the party once more set out, and in due time arrived in perfect safety at B——.

On arriving at the palace, Albert and Conradine were conducted by Count Saarsden to his private apartment, where he signified he must bear them company for a brief interval. In the meantime, the

stranger, at his own request, and after a few words of explanation, was introduced by the chamberlain to the presence of the margrave. Herman was both surprised and offended at this intrusion, and was about to reprimand the officer, when the stranger begged his attention for a few minutes in private. The margrave appeared at first undecided, but at length granted the request, and signed to the chamberlain to retire.

During the brief explanation given to the stranger, the margrave evinced unequivocal symptoms of the profoundest astonishment, and his visitor had ceased to speak some time ere he could give vent to his surprise. At length he exclaimed—

“Impossible! surely my ears have deceived me!—Heard I aright? William of Hungary here, and unattended? It cannot be!”

“Even as I have said, most worthy and

esteemed brother," replied he, whom I shall henceforth style King of Hungary. "I am indeed that William, who once aspired to the happiness of having a natural claim to that endearing title. Circumstances which I shall hasten to explain, will account for my coming hither in this secret manner; and you, who are a fond father yourself, will, I hope, understand and pardon the step I have taken. I shall not now enlarge on the cruelty and injustice of uniting two persons in the indissoluble bonds of matrimony who are not only cold, but repugnant to each other, but proceed to say, that some reports which lately met my ear respecting your son"—the margrave started—"and which, I must confess, gave me much uneasiness, induced me to take a secret journey hither, that I might judge for myself, and if such and such things were true, break off, in my daughter's name, the meditated alliance between our two houses. In pursuance of



my resolution, I privately quitted my palace, admitting no one to my confidence, not even those most intimately connected with me; and having assumed the disguise of a travelling merchant, directed my course hither.

“Two nights ago I entered Hechingen, and a circumstance occurred there, which convinced me I had not been abused with falsehoods; in short, I was perfectly convinced that Beatrix of Hungary could never constitute the happiness of Albert of B——.”

The margrave groaned.

“Fret not yourself at my assertion,” pursued his majesty, and above all, seek not to render your only child miserable, by forcing his inclinations. You will be astonished to hear, that I travelled hither in company with Prince Albert and the lovely girl to whom he has devoted his heart. At Hechingen, Count Saarsden overtook the fugitives; and the resistance made to the

count's authority by your noble and gallant son first drew my attention, and, finally, claimed my warmest admiration — my tenderest compassion. And here let me say, that the young female is not so much to blame as you may imagine. She refused to quit Romana with her lover: he told me so himself, although he warmly importuned her to do so; and had she remained beneath the baron's protection, he assured me he never would have presumed to urge her again on that subject. Accident led him to discover de Konisburgh's base intentions, who, far from fulfilling his promise to your highness, possessed himself of the maiden, under false pretences; and had it not been for your son's gallantry, an innocent and lovely girl would have become the victim of a perjured ruffian."

"Then the Baron Romana stands acquitted of conniving at my son's rash folly?" exclaimed the margrave.

“Who accused him of such baseness?” inquired the king.

“One who shall repent his audacity,” rejoined the margrave. “Yesterday an express from de Konisburgh, who lays at Romana, desperately wounded by Prince Albert, gave me to understand that the baron was at the bottom of the whole affair, and that it was through his treachery my son became acquainted with his (de Konisburgh’s) movements; he also added another piece of information, which I never suspected before, but which seems fully to account for Romana’s conduct. This Conradine, who has bewitched my unhappy boy, the count assures me is his base-born daughter, by that woman they call Pauline; and acting on this information, I have sent to arrest him, and have also given orders to immure the woman in a cloister.”

“I am sorry for it, but yet I cannot blame your highness,” replied his majesty.

“ May I, however, entreat you to suspend your judgment on what I venture to pronounce a gross calumny, till you have seen Conradine? She is already in the palace: let me lead her hither.”

The margrave started back, in anger.

“ See the sorceress!” exclaimed he.

“ Does your majesty mean to insult me?”

“ Far from it,” replied William, mildly.

“ Such a thought never entered my mind; but I have the strongest reasons for wishing you to behold this innocent and lovely young creature; in short, on your compliance depends a weighty question, not less than our future good understanding: for if you refuse my request, we part—part at enmity, and for ever.”

The margrave saw his visitor was serious, and he struggled hard to overcome the repugnance he felt to comply with his proposal: he would willingly have had time for reflection; but he saw the king was impa-

tient, and he feared to irritate a temper—  
fame had represented as far from cool.

“I would see my guilty son before I hold his bane,” said the margrave, in a low voice.

“Pardon me,” answered his majesty—“to that I cannot consent. I have pledged myself to Prince Albert to plead his cause—to stand between him and your paternal displeasure, and, if possible, bring about an union between——”

“Never, never!” vociferated the margrave, interrupting the royal speaker: “never shall Albert of B—— espouse a low-born villager; never, with my consent, withdraw his pretensions to your daughter.”

“Be assured,” replied his majesty, faintly smiling, “I never meant to advise you to raise a villager to the honour of your son’s alliance. As to his pretensions to my daughter, we will discuss that point more fully another time: you will see my little

tegeé, and then, if you still continue to  
rik her unworthy of the prince's love, I  
I no longer press the matter."

The margrave was rather offended at the  
ter part of the foregoing speech, but,  
m some incongruities in his guest's man-  
", he began to suspect his mind was dis-  
bed; willing, therefore, to soothe rather  
m irritate him by opposing his strange  
im, he signified his consent to see Con-  
line, and his guest, apparently highly  
tified, instantly retired. But William  
not yet attained his object; for he had  
ost as much difficulty in persuading the  
to resign Conradine to his care as he  
to induce the father to receive her. The  
id girl herself shrank with horror from  
thought of meeting the eyes of one she  
ew must be so inimical to her, and, almost  
useless, his majesty supported her into the  
esence of him who was fully prepared to  
ew her with disgust.

When the cabinet door opened, the margrave involuntarily raised his eyes; but no sooner had they rested on Conradine, than he uttered a loud convulsed cry, faltered out the name of *Hermangarde*, and fell, stunned by the violence of his feelings, back in his chair.

“Heaven be praised!” exclaimed the king—“the likeness has struck him, as I thought it would;” and tenderly embracing the shrinking, trembling girl, he placed her on a couch, while he went to assist the margrave. No sooner had that agitated man recovered the power of speech, than, looking earnestly at Conradine, he said—

“Is that indeed Hermangarde, or her spirit? Speak, speak!—keep me not in this torturing suspense.”

“Alas!” replied his majesty, “you behold not your beautiful sister; but, if I do not delude myself with chimerical hopes, the child of Hermangarde is before you.”

He then repeated what Conradine had told him of herself, and also spoke of the trinkets as corroborating her simple and imperfect relation.

“Most wonderful!” exclaimed the margrave. “Hermangarde did not die”—he then looked much embarrassed at the consciousness of having betrayed a secret, and said—“show me the trinkets ; perhaps I may recognise them.”

They were instantly brought to him : he started, and grew pale as he gazed on them.

“Alas!” said he, “full well I know them. Unfortunate Hermangarde! lovely, but imprudent—little did I think you had left a living witness of your folly!”

Then shuddering, he pushed the baubles from him, and covered his face with his hands. But he had not permission to indulge long in the bitterness of his regret. The voice of his royal visitor aroused him



from a painful reverie, and words of the strangest import fell on his astonished ear: he rose involuntarily from his chair, and gazing wildly on Conradine—

“Your daughter! say you? Great God! Were you indeed the minstrel Conrad?”

“I was,” replied the king; “and the margravine was in the full possession of my secret.”

“Wretched woman!—then she destroyed my unhappy sister! But she shall answer for her treachery. We must search this mystery to the bottom. Romana will soon be here. Oh, my persecuted sister! why did you not trust in me?”

“Alas!” said William of Hungary, deeply sighing, “I was the first, the only author of her sorrows. Had I patiently awaited the appointed time, I might now have been the happy husband of the only woman I ever truly loved. But the will of Heaven be done. Embrace your niece, my brother;

behold in her your future daughter-in-law—my eldest daughter, the lawful heiress of my crown and kingdom!”

Leaving Condradine in the arms of her uncle, his majesty hastily retired to conduct the impatient Albert to the feet of his sire, and, ere the margrave had missed him, he was again in the apartment, accompanied by the prince. Duty prompted the young man to seek his father’s feet, but his conductor restrained him.

“Hear what I have to say,” pursued his majesty; “and then humble yourself to the parent whom your rashness has so justly offended.”

Then approaching Condradine, and leading her to the prince, he said, exultingly—

“Behold your affianced bride, the acknowledged and first-born daughter of William of Hungary, by his espoused bride, Hermangarde of B——.”

Albert was all amazement, as well he

might be, at this unexpected and most wonderful declaration. His strange dream at Romana recurred to his memory, so forcibly, indeed, that he hardly dared to look round, lest he might behold the demon and his upraised dagger. A moment or two, however, served to dispel the delusion, and recall him to all the certainty of waking bliss. He caught Conradine with a hasty, fond pressure to his heart, and then rushed to his father's feet, where I shall leave him, while I retrace some events that it is now fully necessary to make known.

## PART VIII.

“She now felt that her short dream of happiness was over, and that she had nothing but the recollection of its few blissful hours.”

“Oh, grief, beyond all other griefs, when fate  
First leaves the young heart lone and desolate !”

ABOUT eighteen years before the period at which this tale commences, a young minstrel arrived at B——, and so great was his skill that his fame was not long in reaching the ears of the margrave, who being excessively fond of music, had the stranger brought before him.

The skill of Conrad (for so the minstrel

was called) had not been overrated. The margrave and his whole court were in ecstasies, and the former, anxious to keep such a surprising genius near him, offered him a pension, which, strange to say, the wandering bard refused; at the same time modestly intimating, that while he remained in B——, if so it pleased his highness, he would be both proud and happy to exert his skill for such an admirer of the tuneful art. The margrave accepted the offer, intending whenever the young man showed an inclination to depart, to make him such a present as should at once satisfy his own liberal spirit, and not offend the son of song. Matters being thus arranged to the satisfaction of all parties, Conrad came daily to court, and became a favourite, not only with the margrave, but with his family and courtiers. The margrave had an only and very lovely sister, who had been for some time affianced to the Prince Royal of

Hungary, and the nuptials were expected to be solemnized early the following year. Hermangarde had never beheld her destined lord, nor indeed did she ever wish to do so, for her sister-in-law, the margravine, for some private views of her own, had painted the prince to his contracted bride in the most unfavourable colours, and the young princess, in consequence, felt an unconquerable repugnance to unite her fate with one she had been taught to consider so unamiable. As the time drew near for consummating her misery, she became restless and melancholy; but having given a promise to the margravine never to repeat what she had told her in confidence, she invariably refused to satisfy her brother's inquiries, who had with pain observed her melancholy, though he could by no means guess its cause. The margrave was most fondly attached to his sister, and it gave him great uneasiness to witness her health

and spirits both failing at the very time he wished to see her blooming and cheerful. He spoke of his anxiety to his consort, but she made light of it, and accounted naturally enough for the princess's sadness, by reminding him of the approaching separation between her and a brother she had long and tenderly loved, and who was so devoted to her.

"It is enough to make a young and timid girl melancholy," said she, "to reflect that she is about to be separated from all she has ever loved, for the arms of a stranger—to quit the happy scenes of her infancy, and the friends she esteems, for a foreign country and new faces. You must allow, my dear Herman, these are great trials; but, when she is married, she will soon change her opinion. An amiable husband will shortly reconcile her to the loss of her early friends, and in new scenes and new connexions she will cease to regret those

she has left behind. Instead of letting her mope about and spoil her beauty, like a silly child as she is, let us invent amusements to keep her from thinking of this terrible separation. She is young, and cannot be averse to gaiety. Do not appear to notice her dejection—trust me, it will soon wear away, and you will once more have your beloved Hermangarde as cheerful and as blooming as you could wish.”

The margrave allowed the margravine’s suggestions might be correct, and her advice, in consequence, good: he, therefore, lost no time in putting the latter into practice, and never had the court of B—— appeared more brilliant; never had such a succession of revels, masks, and tournaments been witnessed since the days of Herman’s grandfather. In all these scenes of mirth and splendour the stranger, Conrad, took a distinguished part, and it was not long before the innocent heart of Herman-



garde acknowledged a secret but powerful prepossession in his favour. Unhappy princess!—imprudent and thoughtless! your historian would willingly erase the lines that record your weakness from his page, but it must not be, and it is with a sigh he is forced to acknowledge that the minstrel was not slow in perceiving the admiration with which he had inspired the sister of his unsuspecting patron. Under a pretence of improving herself in music, she often admitted the minstrel to her presence when her waiting damsel alone was present; but she sat at such a distance, that she could by no means hear the conversation that passed between the princess and her companion.

In one of these interviews, the minstrel had the temerity to avow an ardent passion for his fair pupil. Now was the time for Hermangarde to have asserted her dignity—to have repulsed her audacious suitor; but,

alas! the weakness of the woman prevailed over every other consideration—she acknowledged a reciprocal attachment, and, in a very short time after, yielding to the earnest solicitations of her lover, she consented to be united to him by a priest who had long attended her as her confessor, and who, strange to say, was easily won over to further the minstrel's views.

For some time all went on well. The minstrel retained his reputation at court, and still delighted his unsuspecting patron with his unrivalled strains. Hermangarde, little suspecting that her partiality for Conrad excited notice, gratified her love at the expense of prudence, and admitted him daily to her presence. In the meantime the margravine, who had long felt jealous of her fair sister-in-law, and who had made a most unwelcome discovery, watched for a favourable opportunity to ruin her unsuspecting rival: that oppor-

tunity was, alas! not long wanting; and one morning, at an early hour, Sophia entered her sister's chamber. The young princess was seated beside her lover; his arm was thrown round her slender form, and his eyes, beaming love and joy, were bent in rapture on her lovely face. Sight of horror for the margravine! Fearful intrusion for the imprudent lovers!

In a moment the minstrel had quitted his place, and with hasty steps approached the intruder.

"Imprudent man!" said she, in a whisper too low to be heard by Hermangarde—"what demon tempted you to this folly? Away! take this key, and await me in my closet."

As if acting under some powerful spell, the minstrel took the offered key; but ere he retired, he cast a glance of affection and deep regret on his fainting bride.

"Leave her to me," said Sophia, in the

same low tone as before: "she shall be taken care of; but, as you value her fame and life, leave her!"

The minstrel obeyed; and never again did his eyes behold the beautiful being who, in an imprudent hour, had joined her fate with his.

When Conrad was out of sight and hearing, the margravine approached her sister, and with well-feigned concern deplored her error.

"Unhappy girl!" said she, with a mixture of pretended pity and indignation. "What tempted you to encourage such a low-born slave? What will your unhappy, deeply-abused brother, say? Who shall speak peace to his wounded mind?"

The wretched Hermangarde could not reply to her sister's just reproaches; she hid her face in her hands, and sobbed aloud. At the mention of what her brother would probably suffer on her account, her feelings

became intensely painful—a dying sickness crept over her whole frame, and ere she could entreat the margravine to conceal her folly from that beloved relative, her senses fled, even at the moment the unpitying Sophia departed, bent upon mischief, and cruelly resolved on the ruin of one she had ever viewed in the light of a rival.

The tale which it pleased her highness to pour into her consort's ear met no ready credence; but at length, worked upon by her assurances, he avowed his intention of visiting Hermangarde, and hearing from her own lips an explanation of that scene, described in such vivid colours by Sophia, but which his fraternal affection, in spite of all she urged, prompted him to hope was over-painted.

“You do right,” said that proud woman, tossing her head, “to doubt my words—but come to her, and if she deny what I have asserted, then I will confess I have been

amusing you with fantasies of my own creation."

Fearing, yet still trying to encourage hope, the agitated Herman accompanied his consort to the princess's apartment. Alas! the situation in which he found her confirmed his worst fears; she was lying on the floor, in a deep swoon. Indignation, pity, and affection, struggled in his heart for mastery, but not long. Many tender scenes of early life rushed on his memory; many scenes in which Hermangarde, as a lovely and confiding child, reposing on his affection, came in full tide to his recollection. He rushed to her side, and raising her, forgot at that moment all he had so recently heard to her prejudice.

While this scene was passing, the marriage was regarding her relenting consort with scorn and silent contempt. A busy train of thought was passing through her fertile brain, and just as Hermangarde

showed signs of returning consciousness, her highness, turning quickly away, sought with hasty steps her closet and its agonized inmate. The margrave did not observe his lady's departure; his eyes were still bent on the princess, and he almost dreaded her restoration, lest her own tongue might pronounce her guilt. At length Hermangarde opened her eyes, and the first sound that passed her pale lips was the name of *Conrad*. The margrave started.

"Unhappy girl!" cried he, throwing her from him—"and is it true? are you indeed connected with that low minion?"

The princess sighed.

"I am his wife," replied she.

"Impossible!" exclaimed the margrave. "Are you not already the affianced bride of William of Hungary? You could not—dared not contract another marriage."

"Alas! I dared," replied the princess, shuddering—"and thus do I throw myself on your mercy."

So saying, she fell at her brother's feet, and covering her face with her spread hands, waited in silence that dreadful sentence of eternal separation from the object of her imprudent choice, which she expected the margrave every moment to pronounce: but the margrave was not so hasty. He raised her once more, and seating her on a couch, desired her to make a full confession of her fault, as by her own words she should be judged.

Faltering, blushing, and in tears, the humbled, repentant Hermangarde recounted the manner in which the minstrel had wooed and won her inexperienced heart.

"Alas!" said she, "I saw not till this moment the full extent of my imprudence; but if contrition for a crime can lessen its enormity, may my remorse lessen mine! All I ask from your clemency, oh, my brother! is a safe-conduct hence for my unhappy—— I will not name him to you, but you know to whom I allude."



“Wretched girl!” exclaimed the margrave—“alas! too well. Base slave! *he* merits not my clemency; and were your fame less dear to me than it is, he should not, even at your intercession, escape my vengeance. As it is, his life is safe: let him, however, avoid my sight. And you must swear a deep and solemn oath, never, while life lasts, to behold him again.”

“Ah, my brother!” cried Hermengarde, “if I know my own heart, an oath to that effect is unnecessary; for though I still love—frown not so darkly, oh, Herman! at that avowal—I will never, if I can avoid it, see *him* again. Are you satisfied?”

“Were I to say, yes, I should speak falsely,” replied the margrave. “Alas! I fear many a day must pass ere I can feel so, at least with you. I do not say you cannot satisfy me; but more of that anon. I will now leave you, to seek the margravine, and induce her to come into my views respecting you.”

So saying, and deeply distressed, the amiable Herman quitted his sister; but some time elapsed ere he could obtain an interview with his consort; she was deeply engaged—how, will be seen in due place.

In the meantime the minstrel effected a hasty retreat from B——, and some trivial cause was assigned for his sudden departure. If the princess's passion was guessed at by some, the length it had carried her remained a profound secret. From a short interval of gloom the court once more emerged into gaiety, and the approaching nuptials of the princess with the heir of Hungary were again the general theme of conversation; indeed, the margrave took every opportunity of impressing on his sister the necessity of fulfilling her engagement with her royal suitor, reconciling her to that necessary measure by assurances that her union with her low-born lover was invalid. Alas! the unhappy Hermengarde

needed not this assurance to fill up the measure of her woes. Still she could not quietly submit to perjure herself in the sight of Heaven. The most sacred ties bound her to the humble Conrad, and she was resolved never to impose even on one so unworthy as she had been taught to believe Prince William, a heart and hand already given to another.

In this determination she was secretly strengthened by the margravine, whose pretended pity completely won the confidence of the princess, and whose lively descriptions of the disgrace she would suffer if once her secret were publicly known, so worked upon Hermangarde, that she besought her perfidious confidante to put her in a way of escaping the dreadful fate awaiting her.

Nothing could be more consonant to the margravine's wishes: she assured the princess that she would do all in her power to

save her from a deprecated union and the anger of her brother.

"If we were at Hermanstadt, I could befriend you better than here," said Sophia. "Suppose you ask the margrave's permission to spend the time that must intervene (before Prince William arrives) at that secluded mansion; I will accompany you thither, and when there, arrange something for the future."

The unfortunate Hermangarde too easily came into this scheme, and that very hour made her request to her brother, who was by no means averse to the measure, particularly as his sister no longer opposed the wish nearest his heart.

"You are free to go, Hermangarde," said the margrave; "perhaps solitude and retirement will do more for you than noise and merriment; but understand me well—you marry Prince William, or forfeit my esteem for ever."

The princess shuddered, but made no reply; she, however, bent her head, and her brother took the inclination as a mute indication of her willingness to preserve his love, even at the price of her future peace of mind. He regretted that there should exist a necessity for such harshness, but he could not resist the prospect of aggrandizing his house, merely out of compliance with the wayward wishes of a girl who had greatly weakened the strong affection he had once borne her, by her unfortunate attachment to a man so every way below her. With some show of his former affection, he took leave of her, and, attended by the margravine, her own confessor, and two female attendants, she set out for that solitary palace, so memorable in the annals of the house of B——.

A few days only elapsed after her arrival at Hermanstadt, when the margravine sent to apprise her consort that the princess

dangerously ill. Full of fears, the still brother set out for the palace, fearing every step he should be too late to see sister in life. On arriving at the castle, was met by the margravine, who in ice led him to a private chamber. This variation almost deprived him of his senses: all his former affection for Hermanne returned, and taught him to apprehend the worst. The dreadful information, before, imparted by his consort failed at last to affect him so deeply as she had anticipated. But when he could recall his sensitive senses, and reflect on what he had heard, the deepest distress took possession of his mind; and wringing his hands in agony, he exclaimed, in a paroxysm of agonate regret—

Would to God she were indeed dead! better that than infamy!—Lost, lost Hermanne! Ah! where were all your promises to me?"

“Alas!” replied the margravine, sympathizingly—“she was so besotted with her fatal passion, that she could not contemplate an union with her affianced lord; and if I might venture an opinion, I should say she has fled to the arms of her ignoble lover. Banish her idea from your mind, my dear Herman,” pursued this artful woman; “she is most unworthy of your love or pity.”

“But her fame!” said the margrave, dashing the tears from his eyes—“I would spare that from reproach.”

“Then let it be believed that she died of her late disorder,” rejoined the wily margravine. “Very few are privy to the truth: we can command their silence. We will follow her supposed remains to B—, and send couriers to Hungary to apprise the prince of the melancholy event.

Herman hesitated. The crooked path of deceit he abhorred; but he could not bear

to think that his sister's memory should lay under so foul a stigma, if he could possibly prevent it: he therefore, though reluctantly, consented to adopt the margravine's plan; and it was soon generally believed that the princess was no more.

The margrave was astonished, when he had a little recovered the first shock he received on coming to Hermanstadt, not to behold the venerable confessor of his erring sister, whose attachment to the princess he knew to be truly paternal. He mentioned the circumstance to his consort, who briefly said, that immediately on the flight of the princess, the priest had also disappeared.

"Doubtless he has borne her company," said this false woman; "for I more than suspect he was privy to her shameful secret, and even himself united her to her low-born paramour."

The margrave was shocked at this evidence of the delinquency of one he had so



much esteemed and trusted; for he by no means doubted the truth of the margravine's assertion: indeed, years elapsed, as the story evinces, ere the veil was removed from his eyes, ere he became painfully certain that his unfortunate sister, though erring, had been the victim of the cruelest deceit, and had fallen completely into the snares of a woman as proud as she was unfeeling, treacherous, and cruel.

When Sophia had worked upon the fears of her sister-in-law, and obtained the wish nearest her heart, she provided her victim with a disguise, and advised her to seek the shelter of some obscure religious house, where she might bury herself and her shame for ever.

It was far, however, from Sophia's intention that Hermangarde should actually put this advice into execution. She employed a confidential and hard-hearted creature of her own to accompany the princess, under

pretence of guarding her, but, in truth, on the first favourable opportunity, it was the margravine's positive injunctions that the unhappy princess should be disposed of in such a manner that her voice should never rise up to condemn her (the margravine); and had the hired blood-spiller not possessed more compassion than the woman and the pretended friend, the unfortunate Hermangarde's earthly troubles would sooner have been over than they really were.

When well advanced into the forest, the poor wanderer ventured to consult her guide respecting the road they should pursue, and was advised by him to bend her steps to a small obscure convent a few leagues off, in which his sister was the portress, and to whom he would introduce her highness; in what character he did not explain. Not suspecting treachery, the unhappy wanderer eagerly availed herself of this advice, and following the steps of her

false guide, the intended victim proceeded still deeper and deeper into the heart of the forest.

When night came on, the princess, weary and dispirited, told her companion that without some rest she could not proceed. Willing to indulge her, he begged her to sit down, and that while she rested herself he would also take a little repose.

“ At dawn of day you will be better able to proceed, and another hour’s walking will take you to your future home.”

He then pressed her to take some food; and having supped himself, he stretched himself on the ground, and either slept or pretended to do so. In the meantime, the unfortunate Hermangarde, almost bereft of hope, sat in melancholy silence, watching the pale stars, as one by one they became more visible in the dark vault of heaven. What a situation was hers! Alone, or nearly so, in a lonely forest, at the mercy of a man

who at times appeared to eye her with hardly concealed ferocity, and who might at any moment raise his arm against her with impunity, if it were only to possess himself of the few valuables she carried about her person. "Yet," thought she, "I may greatly wrong him: after a rude fashion, he has been kind me. I will distrust him no more." Then sinking on her knees, she supplicated Heaven for support and consolation, prayed fervently for her brother and his welfare, for the happiness of her cruel, heartless sister-in-law, and for another whose name, though unuttered, was still dearer to her than all the world beside. This duty performed, the hapless mourner, though unwilling to give way to sleep, was at length overcome, and leaning against the bole of a tree, for a short time forgot her woes in a friendly oblivion. When convinced she was really asleep, her guide arose from his well-feigned slumber. "I could

now," thought he, "execute my purpose, and prevent thy waking at least in this world; but I cannot do it: she lives, for me. Not one hair of that fair head would I harm. Sorrowful enough is thy lot, poor lady! Rufo will not add one pang to a heart already broken. How fervently she prayed," said he, turning away. "Would I could pray like her! Ah! how much more need have I of prayer! Adieu, lady! I leave thee to thy destiny. Poor thing!—on her waking, how will she marvel to find herself alone!" So saying, he returned to Hermanstadt, and allayed the fears of the margravine with the most positive assurances that the princess was no more.

In this belief Sophia continued till her late journey to V——. Rufo, as usual, formed one of her *suite* to that capital, and, while there, was seized with a mortal malady, which in three short days brought him to the grave. Just before his death, he pleaded

so earnestly to see the margravine, that her highness, with a show of great condescension, presented herself at his bedside; and when (by his desire) all had retired, he revealed the secret he had so carefully guarded for years. Sophia was so enraged at his deceit, that she turned from him in anger, exclaiming—

“ False slave! expect no pardon from me—me, whom you have so deceived! I trusted in your assurances, and have been deluded. Conscience, indeed! what had such a one as you to do with conscience? Obedience was *your* duty.”

So saying, and heedless of the dying wretch's urgent entreaties, she quitted the chamber. An hour after, Rufo was a corse!

It was this interview that threw such a gloom over the margravine—not her son's disappearance, to which she pretended to attribute it; and hence also arose the uncommon agitation she evinced on seeing

Conradine, whose remarkable likeness to the unfortunate Hermangarde might never have created such an uncontrolled display of feeling, had she been still in ignorance of Rufo's death-bed confession.

If the wretched Rufo had been faithless to his mistress in one point, he had been but too faithful in another: St. Geraldimo, Hermangarde's confessor, had fallen beneath his guilty hand. That venerable being, struck with grief at his beloved child's disappearance, and fearing all was not right between her and the margravine, sought an interview with the latter, and this wily woman soon became mistress of every secret of the guileless being's heart. Under the show of the profoundest sorrow, she gradually drew him into a full disclosure of all he knew respecting the minstrel; and with real dismay heard him avow his knowledge of the rank of the pretended Conrad, and his determination to go in quest of Her-

mangarde; and if he failed in finding her, to proceed to B——, and apprize the margrave of the whole affair.

“If you are correct in your story, reverend sir,” replied the margravine, pale with rage, “you will be only doing your duty to apprize the margrave of a secret, I can assure you, neither he nor I ever guessed at before. But it moves my wonder that you never sought to soothe the princess’s sadness by a disclosure of the real rank of the minstrel. Why let her pine in hopeless grief, when it was in your power to set her heart at rest? Methinks also, his highness was to blame; it was surely his duty, ere he quitted the court, to disclose his name to his bride. His not doing so leaves a doubt on my mind as to the truth of your recital. You must pardon my honest avowal, holy sir; but I am sure you will acknowledge I have some reason for my scepticism.”



"Alas, madam!" replied the confessor, "your doubts, though bearing hard upon my veracity, are by no means well founded. The noble stranger was, too surely, William of Hungary, else no consideration on earth should have induced me to join his hand with that of the Lady Hermangarde. A romantic desire to be loved for his own sake, induced him to assume the disguise in which he appeared at B——; and he made me solemnly promise to keep his secret till it pleased him to reveal it. He often amused himself with fancying what would be the princess's astonishment when he should appear in his real character; but had I imagined my beloved child did not mean to await his arrival, I would have broken my promise, and told her all. Oh, dearest lady! why did you not consult me? The step you have taken is at best a rash one!"

"Truly may you say so," replied the margravine, trying to appear calm. "I

ever to say, little better could have been expected from one so regardless of decorum as the Lady Hermangarde. It is useless, however, to dwell on the painful subject. I, reverend father, and either discover her whereabouts, or apprise her mourning brother of the facts you have just related to me. Should he never be fated to see the princess again, it will be some alleviation of his grief. I know that the man she wedded was actually her affianced lord. Speed you, worthy Geraldimo, and may the Holy Mary direct your steps!"

So saying, the margravine dismissed the unfortunate confessor, who, in a very short time, quitted Hermanstadt, but, alas! never to return.

From that day all traces of the reverend father were lost. Some thought grief for the death of his beloved pupil had driven him from B——; others, that he was performing some penance for the repose of

her soul, or had gone on a distant pilgrimage. The truth was never guessed at, till after the late discovery, when a suspicion of the real fate of the confessor flashed across the margrave's mind, and gave a new pang to his already deeply wounded heart.

## PART IX.

“ But nought, oh ! nought, can her restore  
To social life, to happy love.”

“ Let her not quite  
Forget me. Sometimes, in her innocent prayers,  
Let her remember her fond mother.”

WHILE the pompous ceremonial of a mock funeral was taking place at B——, a courier was speeding to Hungary, with the sad news of the princess's death. Prince William, all impatience to claim his lovely bride, was actually on the point of setting out for B——, when the melancholy news of her premature death reached him. The public dispatch was only slightly glanced over,

while a private letter from the margravine was eagerly perused by the unhappy prince, with every demonstration of the deepest anguish. Crushing the fatal paper and thrusting it into his bosom, he rushed into his cabinet, and for many days was alike inaccessible to consolation or the voice of paternal authority. Every one was in amazement that his highness should appear so deeply moved at the loss of a lady he had never seen; but none dared to question him except his father. The unhappy young man, reckless and miserable, made a partial confession to the king, but jealousy guarded the secret of his marriage with Hermangarde, well knowing how little such a communication would have recommended his beloved and lost one to his rigid parent. Allowing his son a reasonable time to indulge his sorrow, the king at length signified his pleasure that the prince should emerge from his seclusion, and prepare to espouse the young Matilda of A——. This princess was the

margravine's sister. But more of this in its proper place.

It is now necessary that I should return to the deserted and forlorn Hermangarde, who, on waking from a short slumber, found herself alone—alone in every sense of the word. Alarmed at her situation, she looked around, and repeatedly calling on Rufo, conjured him to reply to her. No answer, however, was accorded to her agonizing appeals, and almost mad with apprehension, she arose; and hardly knowing what she did, advanced still deeper into the forest. Much as she had distrusted Rufo, she felt his desertion as a new source of sorrow, and willingly would she have heard the tones of his gruff voice once more; but all continued silent, and the dawn of a new day found the deserted Hermangarde still slowly proceeding on her toilsome way—without a guide—without the most distant idea how to proceed—without food, faint, and weary. The young and tenderly nurtured princess be-

gan to despair: she could go no farther — She uttered a short prayer, and resigning herself to her fate, sank perfectly exhausted on the cold earth.

The day was advancing, but the unfortunate sufferer had neither strength nor spirits to exert herself. The air was cold but fortunately she was in a sheltered little dell. Expecting no succour, she resigned herself to the fate that seemed awaiting her — namely, to die of hunger in the solitude of the dreary forest; should, indeed, such a peaceful death be granted her, for might she not fall the victim of some prowling beast of prey. Shuddering at the fearful thought, she buried her face in her pilgrim's hood, and sobbed aloud.

Just at this time a slight noise, at a little distance from where she lay, made her fear her worst apprehensions were about to be realized. She clasped her hands tightly, so intense was her alarm; she gave herself up for lost; and in that moment of

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keen suffering, one short prayer ascended to heaven from her parched and trembling lips. Scarcely had she concluded her supplication, when the tones of a very youthful voice struck on her ear, and venturing to peep out, she beheld with joy the figure of a little peasant boy, holding a goat in a string, gazing at her with mingled surprise and alarm. Making a great exertion, the poor sufferer raised herself on her elbow, and speaking with gentleness, asked the boy to tell her where she was. The child, for some time, could not be made to comprehend her question—astonishment having usurped all his faculties. At length, however, he took in her meaning, and replied that she was near the Castle of Romana. What happy intelligence was this for the helpless, perishing wanderer! No sooner did she hear it, than her resolution was taken: she would throw herself on the baron's mercy, and keeping nothing respecting herself from his knowledge, ask him to befriend her.



“ Could you go, my child,” said she, “ to the castle, and ask to see the baron? Bear this to him, and say the owner lies dying in the forest. He will reward you, and so will God.”

The boy took the ring, and looked with pleased surprise at the glittering bauble.

“ I need not go to the castle to find my lord,” said the boy; “ he is walking in the grove: I saw him as I passed by. We are very near the castle. I will just tie the goat to this tree, and run to him. I will soon be back.”

The little messenger, true to his promise, was indeed soon back, and, happy sight for Hermangarde! was accompanied by the baron. The boy having executed his task, and received a small piece of money from Romana as his reward, released his charge, and bounding away, was soon out of sight.

The baron, with astonishment and perplexity, had heard the child's relation, and

tantly recognising the ring as belonging to the late margravine, hastily followed his sliding steps to where the princess lay. He induced the princess to close her eyes, so that Romana at first did not recognise her, but on being kindly spoken to by him, she took courage, and throwing aside her muffler, he beheld, with unfeigned astonishment, the sister of his sovereign at his feet!

“Is it possible!” exclaimed the baron, starting back. “Do I indeed see the princess Hermangarde? What unaccountable circumstance has brought your highness hither?”

“Well may you ask, my lord,” replied the princess, blushing deeply. “When you hear my story, I fear condemnation will be due to your astonishment; but spare me now. I am perishing with hunger: relieve my most pressing necessity, and then I will tell you all.”

"Can you manage to walk, lady?" inquired the baron; "my castle is near. I will conduct you thither."

"I dare not appear openly there, or anywhere else," sobbed the princess, covering her face with her spread hands. "I have excited the displeasure, nay, the contempt of my brother. He will never pardon me now. I dare not let him know where I am, nor even that I exist. Hide me from him, and all the world—that is the only favour I ask at your hands."

Lost in the profoundest astonishment, Romana assisted the princess to rise.

"Compose yourself, unhappy lady," said he; "sit down on this bank for a minute or two, and perhaps you will then be able to proceed. You have nothing to fear from being seen at Romana; no one there will betray you."

"No, no!" cried the princess, wringing her hands. "You know not how I am

situated. Listen—I must confide in you. I have no alternative.”

“Tranquillize your mind, I beseech your highness,” said the baron, soothingly. “If I can do aught to serve you, be assured I will do it most willingly. Only trust me—tell me all your griefs—look upon me as one devoted to your service. Have I not been always faithful to your family?”

Greatly comforted by these assurances, Hermangarde, without further hesitation, reposed the secret of her ill-advised marriage, and all the misfortunes resulting from it, in the sympathizing bosom of Romana. The baron listened, in pained and wondering silence; in pity, however, to the humbled princess, he forebore to express his opinion.

He plainly saw, from what she related, that she could not give her hand to the Prince of Hungary, nor, indeed, return with safety to B——. He was led to conjecture, from what she had related, that the

margravine had been cruelly abusing her credulity, for some sinister views of her own he positively knew one statement of her was devoid of truth, namely, the slander she had uttered respecting the character Prince William, who was anything such as she had induced the princess to believe him.

Feeling deeply for the situation of the misguided and suffering Hermangarde, the amiable Romana was not slow in assuring her of his protection, nor did he enhance the value of the obligation he was about to confer by a vain parade of words: he simply assured the princess that with his life he would protect her. Then begging her to remain quietly where she was, he told her he would hasten to the castle, and procure her some refreshment, of which she appeared to stand in great need. Too much overpowered by such kindness to speak, the almost fainting sufferer, leaning against

bank on which she sat, waited patiently the return of her sympathizing friend.

In the meantime the baron hastened to the castle, pondering, as he went, on the melancholy story he had just heard, and very much at a loss how to conceal the poor princess from the eye of prying curiosity. At length he came to the determination of placing her in the long deserted western tower, to which he could gain access without entering the inhabited part of the castle, and there he knew she might remain in perfect safety till he could devise some plan for her future accommodation.

Having procured such refreshment as he could command, without applying to any of his household, and also the key of the postern of the western tower, he returned to Hermangarde, who eagerly partook of the refreshment he brought, and when her slight repast was over, he told her he would lead her to a temporary, but secure asylum.

While they were slowly proceeding to the western tower, the baron ventured to hint the absolute necessity of admitting some one to their confidence. Hermangarde shuddered, but spoke not.

“Do not be alarmed,” said the baron; “I will trust nobody but one on whom I can rely implicitly. I will consult my sister. She would rather die than betray a trust confided to her.”

“Ah!” cried Hermangarde, bedewing the baron’s hand, which she pressed to her lips, with the tears of grateful respect, “you are too good to me—erring being that I am! Alas! how very unworthy I am of such exalted, such truly disinterested kindness.”

The baron succeeded in conducting his fair charge to her temporary home without being seen, and then left her to seek and apprise his sister of the unexpected visitor he had received.

Baroness Pauline Walstein, the baron’s

sister, was a widow, without children, and had arrived at that time of life when the enthusiasm of youth had mellowed into the more sober feelings of a maturer age, when the heart rather than the fancy prompts to virtue and benevolence. In early youth, and even in more advanced life, she had been much at court, and had shared largely in the favour and friendship of the margravine, Hermangarde's mother. This circumstance was by no means unfavourable to the daughter, whose errors and distresses, as related to her by the baron, met from her with a ready sympathy, though not with that ready pardon accorded to them by her mother.

When the strange recital was concluded, the baron spoke of his perplexity respecting the future disposal of their unhappy guest. He knew that there were many chambers, or rather caverns, attached to the western wing by an under-ground passage, and in



which, as tradition reported, many illustrious individuals had found (from time to time) a safe retreat.

“I will explore those chambers, and, if practicable, fit them up for Hermangarde’s use,” said the baron; “at present she must occupy the chamber I have placed her in. Come, my sister, accompany me to her; she much wants the soothing cares of one of her own sex.”

The baroness offered no objection to this visit, but she could not help deeply rebuking the princess, as she proceeded. No sooner, however, did she behold her, than her beauty, her youth, and her melancholy destiny, so powerfully wrought on her feelings, that pity usurped the place of every hostile feeling, and bursting into a flood of tears, she took the unhappy outcast to her bosom, and vowed to be henceforth and for ever her devoted friend.

While the baroness remained to console the princess, Romana quitted them to ex-

plore the caverns, and finding a residence within their gloomy precinct not impracticable, returned to inform his sister.

By degrees this indefatigable friend removed from the western wing such articles of furniture as were indispensable, and in less than a week the least cheerless of the caverns was ready to receive their truly unfortunate tenant.

Alas! who can describe the feelings of the once admired, almost worshipped Hermangarde, when she found herself the solitary tenant of a subterranean abode; safe, it is true, from the dreaded anger of her brother, but isolated from her fellow-beings, and despairing of ever again beholding him who had betrayed her to ruin—him, who notwithstanding all that she had suffered on his account, was still loved with that devotedness of which only the female heart is capable.

When the princess had been about six

weeks the solitary inhabitant of her cheerless retreat, (the baron and his sister only venturing to visit her at night,) the latter came to the generous resolution of sharing her captivity.

“She will soon want all my care,” said this kind-hearted woman to her brother, “and I cannot leave her to suffer in solitude. We must devise some plan to account for my absence from the castle, for I am determined to reside for the future with her, and devote the rest of my life to her service. She seems thrown on our mercy, and we must not give her up.”

The baron, however he might suffer from his sister’s resolution, did not oppose it, nay, more than that, he highly approved it, and began seriously to consider the best means of putting it into execution.

At length, after much reflection, he ventured to propose the following plan:—

“Our aunt, at St. Sibald’s, is ill,” said he;

“you can go on a visit to her: I will leave you there for a few days, and then secretly conduct you back. None of the household need know of your return, as we can enter the castle by the western postern. You must take your good nurse into your confidence; on her you can depend: she can accompany you to St. Sibald’s, and it will not appear strange that you prefer her attendance to that of any of your other women.

“If the Lady Hermangarde survive her hour of trial, and it be necessary for you to remain with her, you can still be supposed at the convent, or you can be thought to have gone to your own residence in Westphalia. This is a slight sketch of my plan—what think you of it?”

“I see no reason to disapprove of it,” replied the baroness, “and the sooner it is put in execution the better. I will repose my confidence in Ulrica to-night, and to-

morrow, at an early hour, we will set out for the convent. The distance is so short, that we can dispense with attendants, and then, when you come to take me thence, your being without grooms will excite no suspicion."

The baron sighed deeply.

"Alas!" said he, fondly, pressing his sister's hand, "to what a melancholy life do you condemn yourself!—and what shall I do without you?"

"Let us not think of ourselves, Ernest," said the baroness. "In doing an act of kindness to this forlorn one, we shall receive our own approbation, and, I trust, the commendation of a pitying God."

It is unnecessary to say the baron's scheme fully succeeded. After spending a couple of days at St. Sibald's, the baroness returned with her brother and Ulrica, with great privacy, and the females were immediately installed the companions and consolers of the drooping Hermangarde.

Shortly after this happy change in her situation, the princess became the mother of a female infant, whose birth, instead of imparting pleasure to her young mother, only served to wring her heart with fresh pangs.

“Alas!” said she to Pauline, “I am not now alone in my misery—here is another being whom my folly must render miserable, whose only portion is obloquy, whose only dependence is on the sufferance of the kind beings who have sheltered her erring mother, nay, whose very life depends on them and their secrecy! Oh, Conrad, Conrad! why were you sent to tempt, and then betray me?”

Pauline’s tears flowed fast as she listened to these bitter self-upbraidings; tears were all her answer, for what could she say in mitigation of the princess’s deeply expressed sorrow but what she had already said and done, to lighten the burden which, in a moment of passion and self-delusion, she had imposed on herself.

Night came, and brought the baron, as usual, to the caves. He found his sister in the outward one, and on her knee reposed the little stranger. The baron cast a significant glance on the child, and then inquired into the state of the young mother.

"She is as well," said the baroness, "as her weakness and deep dejection will permit, but she will never be herself again. The bolt has sped, which, ere many moons, will lay her on her last cold bed. Ulrica has been long preparing me for the sad event."

The baron drew his hand across his eyes, and, stooping down, imprinted a kiss on the baby's soft cheek.

"Well," said he, "if such be the will of Heaven we must submit, nay, bless the hand that deals the blow. But this little bud will expand and bloom when the parent stem is withered, and to us, Pauline, shall she be as a child. May I see the princess?"

"I will ask Ulrica," said the baroness, rising, and entering the interior cave.

She was not long absent, and on re-appearing, beckoned her brother to advance.

"Hermangarde is awake, and wishes to see you, but your visit must be brief."

"It shall, my sister; but I have a duty to perform, which must not be delayed."

Hermangarde received the baron's salutation with a deep blush.

"My child," said he, pressing and kissing her outstretched hand, "be not pained at my presence. I would not have intruded thus early, had I not deemed it absolutely necessary. This infant," pursued he, taking the baby from his sister's arms, "must be baptized, and however unworthy I may be to perform that sacred rite, we have no choice. Our holy church allows a layman (in case of need) to bestow that sacrament, and I am now come to admit



this little innocent a member of Christ's church."

"Kindest of friends!" exclaimed the princess, a transient beam of delight irradiating her languid eyes—"be it as you say; and may God be pleased to receive into his favour the unconscious being you are about to dedicate to his service!"

Ulrica now brought a missal to her lord, who with solemn reverence began the baptismal service. When it became necessary to name the child, he looked towards Hermangarde, who, colouring deeply, pronounced in a clear, though low voice, the name of *Conradine*. The baron sighed, but without comment bestowed that name on the infant.

Time wore away. Hermangarde partially recovered, and in her deep seclusion performed the tender office of nurse to her little Conradine. Pauline watched over both with unwearied assiduity, and the kind Ulrica

devoted herself to the service of all, with unshrinking and uncomplaining patience. The baron, on his part, omitted nothing that could tend to lessen the tedium of their confinement. To supply the recluses with all they required was no easy task. To accomplish the arduous undertaking, he was of necessity obliged to take his steward into his confidence; and under an oath of secrecy, Hugo procured all that the inhabitants of the caverns required, but he did no more; for the baron never allowed him to approach them, always carrying the supplies to them himself. Heaven, as if to reward him for his benevolence and self-denial, blessed him with unbroken health and the happiest cheerfulness of mind.

Besides food, raiment, and the means of whiling away the time, the baron also contrived to procure air and exercise for the recluses. During the summer, he made it an invariable rule to rise with the dawn,

and dedicate the first hours of morning to their recreation.

Immediately over the caverns, and stretching to the west, stood the ruins of a temple, dedicated, four hundred years before, to pagan superstition. After the introduction of Christianity into Germany, this building had received a society of religious men, who continued to inhabit it for nearly two centuries. At the time of the holy wars, these pious brethren quitted their seclusion, and joining the army of Leopold of Austria, repaired with him to Palestine. It is probable they all perished in the Holy Land, for they never returned to inhabit their retreat.

In process of time, the estate annexed to the deserted building was given to an ancestor of Romana's, but with a clause in the grant, that the venerable ruin was to remain uninjured but by the hand of time. The baron who received the grant dwelt for

a long period in the least decayed part of the extensive edifice: at length his longer sojourn in it became impracticable, and he found it absolutely necessary to commence erecting a new abode. Attached to the situation, from its great security and privacy, he built his new castle adjoining the ruins, which, in accordance with the tenour of his grant, were spared, and became, as years wore away, an object of secret dread to the ignorant and superstitious.

The Baron Romana of this legend at one time took great pains to eradicate those fears, and much vexed was he that he did not succeed; but what then gave him annoyance was at a later period a source of infinite satisfaction, for it enabled him to use the ruin in a way he dared not under other circumstances have attempted; and many an hour did he spend in pacing its long aisles with his sequestered companions, when, had his household been questioned,

they would have said he was enjoying the sweets of repose. Not even Hugo, though trusted in part, knew of his lord's frequent visits to the caverns; and being a man most happily devoid of all curiosity, he never sought to dive into more of the mystery than his lord permitted him to know.

The baron at one time hoped to effect a reconciliation between the offending Hermangarde and her brother. On hinting such an idea to the princess, she assured him, with a passionate burst of tears, that she had not the least hope of such a happy event ever taking place. Shortly afterwards, the baron's own hopes were completely crushed by the report of the princess's death. He felt convinced nothing then could be done, as the margrave having resorted to such a measure, was a proof that he had banished his sister from his heart for ever, and that while he lived she could never appear in the world again.

This melancholy conclusion gave the good baron and his sister (to whom he communicated it) sincere regret. However, as it appeared a hopeless case, they resolved to make the best of it, and do all that lay in their power to soften the rigour of entire seclusion to Hermangarde and her lovely child. But, alas! Hermangarde was not destined long to prove the extent of their friendship, and Ulrica's prediction (that she would never be well again) seemed about to be realized. Her strength gradually declined, and she faded from the sight of her anxious friends, like a bright summer cloud before the beams of the sun. She did not, however, complain; but it was evident that death had already set his seal on her, and that consumption, like a canker in the bud, was wasting by slow degrees the springs of life.

The princess appeared fully aware of her awful situation, and spoke to Pauline of her

death with the utmost composure, nay, even with cheerfulness. The baroness was moved to tears, as she listened to her artless expressions of fondness and resignation.

The baron, when he was convinced the princess could not live, once more importuned her to permit him to apprise the margrave of her situation. She resisted, however, most resolutely all his entreaties, and made him again and again renew his promise respecting herself and her child.

Conradine was about nine months old when the life of her young mother drew to a close.

“I regret nothing in this world,” said she, one day, to Pauline, “but my child. If I could take her with me, I should die content. In leaving her, I leave, as it were, my better self behind. As long as you live, my best, my kindest friend, you and the baron will protect her. Life, however, is uncertain. Should you both die,

what would become of my Conradine? How could she then escape my brother's resentment? He would never endure the sight of the child of Hermangarde and the minstrel Conrad."

"Be at peace, my dear lady," replied the baroness; "your child, God willing, shall never want a friend. Should Ernest and myself be summoned to our final account before your Conradine arrives at womanhood, I will entrust her to the care of my aunt, the abbess of St. Sibald's; or, should she have quitted this world before us, to her successor. In that holy seclusion she would be safe. You cannot wish her to pass the spring of her days in this gloomy abode?"

"No," replied Hermangarde, sighing; "my oath to the margravine by no means obliges me to insist on such a measure. When this little innocent is grown up, or rather, when she arrives at the age of seven-



teen, she might be placed in a convent; no one need know her lineage, and under the veil of a nun, no one would look to find the child of Hermangarde. In the meantime I have your promise and that of your brother to keep her here. I know—I feel how unreasonable I am, to bind you to your generous engagement; but a mother's fondness renders me selfish, and I could not die in peace were I to think that my hapless offspring, on my decease, would be produced to the world, and run even the remotest chance of falling into the power of my offended family. Should, however, the margrave and margravine pay the debt of nature before the period I have mentioned, I leave you then free to act as you think proper, though I would never wish my nephew to see his cousin. She must never enter the world as my child. And now," continued the languid Hermangarde, while I am on the melancholy subject, and while

I have strength to make the painful effort, let me bind round my baby's neck these pledges of an ill-fated love and a betrayed friendship. This ring," said she, drawing one from her finger, "was the gift of Herman to his once so fondly loved sister; and this," unclasping a chain, which she drew from its concealment, and taking from it a beautifully-wrought golden heart, "was my too aspiring Conrad's present to me, on that luckless day that made me his wife."

Pauline had never seen this trinket before, and was much surprised to hear that such a costly ornament should have been in the possession of an itinerant musician, for in no other light could Conrad be viewed; but she made no remark.

The princess then laid the heart, her brother's gift, and her wedding-ring, in the palm of her hand. A big tear fell on these memorials of departed happiness. She gazed from them to her child.

Yes," pursued she, "to thee, but to no one else would I yield such valued treasures;" then, passing the chain through them, she softly clasped it round the baby's neck—"let her wear them always, and tell her, dearest friend, when she is old enough to understand you, that a mother's dying hand bestowed the highly-prized gift. Alas! my Pauline, 'tis all her dower!"

Tears dimmed the eyes of Madame Walstein; the patience and suffering of the beautiful creature before her had rendered her inexpressibly dear. Hermangarde heaved a deep sigh; but no tear came to cool the burning bright radiance of her cheeks, or to dim the lustre—the heavenly lustre—of her eyes. She clasped her thin, clear hands, and looked toward heaven.

The baroness gazed on her till a sentiment of extreme awe filled her mind. She even imagined she beheld the apotheosis of her spirit.

“In that look,” said she, in a whisper, “her spirit surely ascended to heaven!” and sinking on her knees, addressed a fervent prayer in her behalf to the Supreme. But Hermangarde was not yet a denizen of immortality: her recollection returned; her eyes fell on the kneeling Pauline; she smiled faintly, but sweetly, stretched forth her hand, and said—

“Not yet: I am still with you.”

The baroness was deeply touched, but, in consideration of the invalid’s weakness and excited feelings, suppressed her emotion.

“I feel disposed to sleep,” said the princess: “perhaps, when I awake, I shall have strength to renew the late conversation; if not, you know my wishes. Kind friends——”

The sentence remained unfinished. She sank back; her eyes closed; the bright colour of her cheek faded; Hermangarde—the betrayed, the injured Hermangarde—became immortal.

The baroness for some time could not believe that she was indeed dead, but expected to see her revive, as she had done just before; Ulrica, however, bade her not indulge in such a hope.

“ Her highness is too surely gone !” sighed the kind creature, looking mournfully from the rigid features and stiffening limbs of the princess to the face of the smiling infant. “ She is, indeed, my beloved lady, past all earthly care.”

The baroness sate for some time with her hands pressed tightly on her eyes; at length she started, and gazing on the cold but placid features of the so lately breathing Hermangarde, exclaimed—

“ Gone ! gone ! so beautiful, so bright, so youthful—gone, and for ever ! Oh, Ulrica ! what a task is ours—in these lone and dismal caverns, to watch beside the corse of one hurried hence by ——But let that rest : it were useless now to dwell upon the

past. The bruised reed is broken—the sorrowing heart is at rest—yes, Ulrica, at rest for ever!”

“Ah, madam! dry your eyes,” said Ulrica; “the change for this high born and suffering lady is a truly happy one. Take this poor innocent from this sad scene, and leave me to arrange the bed of death. You have suffered much already, and, for the sake of the poor infant, you must exert your fortitude. Do, dearest lady, go, go!”

“I will,” said the baroness, taking Conradine in her arms.

The child smiled.

“What, smile!” cried she, impatiently. “Alas! poor babe, thou shouldst rather weep; for the only parent thou canst ever know lies dead before thee.”

Again the infant smiled, and Pauline, in an agony of grief, snatched it to her heart and deluged it with tears. Such is grief—such its inconsistency.

The baron paid his usual visit, and brought a basket of fruit to moisten the fever-parched lips of Hermangarde, but Hermangarde could no longer smile her thanks, or tell him of her gratitude and love.

The good man too soon made the fearful discovery. He gazed on the beautiful corse till he fancied the rigid features relaxed.

"She is not dead!" cried he. "Why did you tell me she was?" He stooped down—he touched her hand—he started. Alas! he could no longer doubt the fatal truth. "She *is* indeed dead!" said he, mournfully, covering his eyes as he spoke—"she is! she is!"

Pauline, who had just put her little charge to bed, entered, and approaching her brother, took his hand, and softly uttered his name. The baron started, but his eyes resting on the tearful face of his sister, he threw himself on her bosom, and they mingled their tears together.

When somewhat composed, he listened to her account of Hermangarde's death, and the affecting conversation which had preceded that melancholy event. The baron's heart was wrung with anguish, for he had become most tenderly attached to the princess, and it was some time before he could regain a little composure. In most sorrowful communing the night waned, and it drew towards midnight ere he prepared to leave the caverns: before he went, however, he paid a visit to the chamber of death. He gazed upon the placid features of the unfortunate princess till he once more felt himself subdued by grief, and wringing his hands, sank on his knees by the side of the couch, and burying his face in the covering of the bed, remained for some time in speechless sorrow. At length, both his sister and Ulrica conjured him to rise, and endeavour to compose himself.

"You are all we have to look to, dearest



Ernest," said the baroness: "you must not thus give way to sorrow. Think of the happy change our lamented Hermangarde has made, and weep no more. Hasten from these drear chambers: their gloom is at present too deep for you. To-morrow night you will come to us again, and then you will be more able to attend to the melancholy task we have still to perform."

The baron groaned.

"Ah, my sister!" said he, "your words are a tacit reproach to me. I act most unkindly: instead of soothing your grief, I only increase it; but expect a change for the better when we meet again. I will come prepared to fulfil the sad duty you allude to. Ulrica, watch over your mistress and that helpless orphan, and Heaven will reward you."

So saying, Romana retired, and the inhabitants of the caverns were left to their melancholy vigil.

Night again brought Romana, provided with such materials as he could conveniently procure for Hermangarde's burial. Ulrica, assisted by the baroness, wound the pale corse in a pall, and then the baron and the former, with slow steps, and lighted by the latter, proceeded to the cavern into which Prince Albert had been precipitated on the memorable night he first saw Conrachine. In an obscure niche of this dreary cave the remains of the high-born Hermangarde were deposited, and she, for whose hand many princes had contended, slept in an unhonoured grave, consecrated only by the tears of the tenderest pity, and lamented only by those who knew her in adversity.

When their melancholy duty was performed, and their burden deposited in its last resting-place, the baron and his companions sank on their knees, and with deep devotion offered many prayers to Heaven for the repose of her soul; then rising, he

sprinkled the cavity with holy water, and the mourners slowly retired from the melancholy scene.

The sorrow into which the early demise of Hermangarde had plunged her friends began gradually to subside, and a chastened regret to usurp the place of that intense grief which, in the first instance, wholly occupied their minds. Pauline gave up her whole time and attention to the little Conradine, while it was the faithful Ulrica's business to minister to both, and to do all in her power to wean the baroness from painful retrospection. As the little girl's understanding became gradually unfolded, it was Pauline's unwearied task to instil good principles into her ductile mind, and being well accomplished, for the period in which she lived, she imparted to her sweet and docile pupil those advantages she so eminently possessed. And well did the little orphan girl repay her care, for nothing

could be more beautiful than her mind and person: she grew like a lovely violet in the shade, and from her very infancy inherited all the charms of her fair but most unfortunate mother. The likeness, also, between the child and her lost mother was so striking, that Pauline and her brother often started on suddenly beholding her, thinking, for a brief interval, that Hermangarde was restored to them.

Everything that could sweeten the rigour of such extreme seclusion was done by Romana, and no opportunity was lost by him of gratifying every wish the willing captives could form. The patient endurance of such an existence exalted the character of his exemplary sister and her humble companion, in his opinion, beyond all praise. He looked upon all he had, or could do, as nothing compared with the sacrifice they made, and made without a murmur; and had not the promise he had

been drawn in to give the princess bound him to persevere in the seclusion of her lovely child, he would have run all risks, and released the prisoners from their cheerless seclusion. At early morning, when his household supposed him enjoying the blessings of repose, he might be seen tracing his cautious footsteps, first to the chamber where Hugo deposited the necessary supplies, and then to the caverns, to cheer their inmates with his beloved presence, and to indulge them with a walk amid the ivy-covered ruins of the adjacent temple. Within the precinct of this deserted building, this amiable man once more descended to the sports of childhood; contending in the race with Conradine, or else pretending to seek her amid the ruined pillars, while her light and happy laugh often betrayed her hiding-place to her *own dear Ernest*, as she always called the baron. Nor was amusement all that occupied the time

and attention of the baron and his companions.

It was amid desolation and decay that Conradine first learned to praise her God, as, kneeling at the remains of the high altar, between her kind friends, she listened to the earnest prayers offered up by Romana in her behalf.

While the baroness and Ulrica were thus devoting themselves to the service of Hermangarde's lovely child, they were supposed by the baron's household to be first at St. Sibald's, and then to have gone to Westphalia. After a time the baron gave it to be generally understood, that the baroness had retired into a convent, in consequence of a vow made during an alarming illness from which she had recovered most unexpectedly. The baron affected to be displeased at this arrangement, and thus the matter ended.

Shortly after, Romana announced his in-

tention of dismissing all the females from his establishment. He knew the sex's failing, and trembled lest any untoward circumstance might lead some of his handmaidens to a knowledge of his jealously guarded secret. This was by no means an agreeable piece of intelligence for the females, nay, even for some of the males of his household. His will, however, could not be disputed; and henceforth the face of a woman was never seen at Romana. This memorable event in the annals of Romana took place during the first three months of the sojourn of the Lady Hermangarde and her friends in the caverns of the castle.

The life led by the Lady Pauline, her young charge, and the faithful Ulrica, presented no variety. Every hour had its task, every day its appointed duty; the baron's visits were the only change that occurred to break the monotony of their unvaried existence.

Till that night, so memorable in her brief existence, when her astonished eyes beheld the youthful Albert, Conradine had never given her mysterious situation one thought, or extended her ideas of human beings beyond the narrow circle which composed her world, nor had she, even in a dream, pictured to her fancy such an image of perfection as the prince presented to her view. Books were not at that period the vehicles of knowledge, at least to females. It is true both Romana and his sister could read and write, and they had instructed Conradine in both arts, but, except the legends of a few saints, and her breviary, she was totally unacquainted with books, and had never even read of a world beyond that in which she breathed; and it was by no means the wish of her friends to enlarge her ideas on a subject that, as she was situated, could only tend to excite an useless curiosity, and perhaps render her dissatisfied and unhappy



with her lot in life. The prince's visit, however, destroyed the happy ignorance in which she had hitherto lived, and raised a tumult in her serene and tranquil mind which nothing could allay.

Waking or sleeping, his graceful form was ever present to her view; and often would she start from a deep reverie, fancying she heard the tones of that voice whose silver melody still seemed to vibrate on her ear.

A being so innocent as Conradine could not always be thus occupied, without betraying herself to one so interested in her happiness as Pauline; yet still a native instinct tied her tongue, and never did she by the slightest word betray the feelings of her heart, or reveal to her anxious, suspecting friend, that admiration of Prince Albert, which was every hour gaining strength, and becoming incorporated with her very existence.

Before taking leave of the inmates of the caverns, for a retrospect of those events connected with the minstrel's first appearance at the court of B——, I must briefly mention that about the time Conradine had attained her fourteenth year, the baroness and her young charge were plunged into the deepest sorrow by the sudden death of their kind and assiduous Ulrica. What a dreadful blow was her demise to those who loved her so sincerely! Indeed, a very long period elapsed ere they ceased to think of her without the most poignant regret. Nor can this be wondered at: she had shared their deep seclusion; and she must have been less amiable, less estimable, than she really was, to be forgotten by those who owed her so much. Nor was regret for the loss of this worthy creature confined to the baroness and Conradine. The baron mourned her loss hardly less than they did; and again did he feel strongly tempted to break his vow,

and remove the solitary captives from their gloomy home; but the baroness would not listen to such a proposition, and they continued to reside in the caverns, as has been already seen, till the period of Prince Albert's most unexpected intrusion.

## PART X.

“ I may not, dare not, fancy now  
The grief that clouds thy lovely brow ;  
I dare not think upon thy vow.”

At the time the Princess Sophia of A—— married the Margrave of B——, she had two noble brothers, to whom her proud father looked to perpetuate his name and titles to posterity. But, alas ! in one battle both these brave princes fell, and with them also fell the ambition of their aspiring parent.

Who can describe how severely this proud, and hitherto cold-hearted prince felt under

this heavy bereavement!—indeed, he all but sank under it. Time, however—that healer of human sorrows—brought serenity, or rather to his lenient hand the stern man owed the melioration of his anguish. His daughter, the margravine, had also no small share in diverting his mind from its potent grief, and giving him new views and new hopes, hitherto completely strangers to his mind.

The margravine was already the mother of a son. The death of her brothers awakened her slumbering ambition. She represented to her father the practicability of breaking off, by intrigue, the contract which bound her sister-in-law to the heir of Hungary, and of substituting her own young sister, Matilda, in the place of that princess.

To open more fully her views to her father, she paid him a visit. The scheme which she proposed, iniquitous as it was, met his full concurrence; and ere she quitted

V——, a plot was arranged for the destruction of the unoffending Hermengarde's peace, nay, even life, should either be found to stand in the way of the innocent Matilda's advancement.

The first steps Sophia took, on her return home, were to vilify and blacken the character of Prince William to his affianced bride, but in such an artful manner that her dupe never suspected her duplicity; and having solemnly promised to conceal the information her treacherous sister-in-law gave her, she continued in error respecting the real character of Prince William, who at length became so hateful to her, that she voluntarily declared to the insidious and cruel Sophia, that, rather than become his wife, she would enter a convent and devote her life to religion.

Nor was the margravine satisfied with thus maligning the prince to his affianced; she employed the wife of a creature of her

own at the Hungarian court, named Burg-hausen, to poison the mind of the prince against the doomed Hermangarde. But when people aim at too much they often find they have overshot the mark; and so it chanced with Prince William. He was not so easily imposed upon as poor Herman-garde had been; and the various reports circulated to the disadvantage of his intended bride excited his curiosity, and led him to take that step which he never ceased to lament.

While intrigue was thus busily at work, the minstrel, Conrad, made his appearance at the court of B——. His reception has been already detailed; and the margravine was not slow in observing that the wandering bard dared to view the high-born Hermangarde with eyes of admiration, and, strange to say, it was equally plain to her that the hitherto bashful beauty encouraged his audacity. But to interrupt the inter-

course was by no means her intention; and she resolved to let it proceed till its discovery would further her own views, and cover her confiding sister with obloquy and contempt.

Thus were matters situated at B——, when the margravine received an intimation from her confidante at Buda, which greatly disturbed her, and brought her quickly to the determination of separating the imprudent lovers, at all risks, and as promptly as possible. The countess's information was couched in the following terms.

“Honoured princess, and most kind patroness,—The task your highness was graciously pleased to impose on your poor and unworthy servant has been (as far as her humble means went) faithfully executed. Your highness may credit her, when she says that no opportunity was lost wherein to serve the end in view, and, to all appearance, success was about to reward the



zeal of your highness's faithful servant. Alas! would she could continue this poor attempt at a letter as she began it! but your highness must prepare to hear intelligence that it almost kills the inditer to write. Prince William (may the curse of Heaven overtake him for his folly!) has departed from Hungary. His majesty the king and the whole court imagine him recreating in the capital of France, while it is the sad hap of your faithful Burghausen to know that he is now at your court, wearing the disguise of a *minstrel*!"

When the margravine came to this part of the letter, she scarcely suppressed a scream, and the unwelcome missive, in the next moment, lay in fragments at her feet.

"Fool!" exclaimed she, when she recovered the power of speech—"fool! why did she not discover this long ago? So this is the end of my hopes! Perdition! Do I live to see myself out-generalled by a couple

of children? But no—I will still carry my point, or see the pale-faced Hermangarde dead at my feet!”

In consequence of this resolution, the margravine watched for an opportunity of bursting on the princess when she knew the minstrel was with her. One consolation was still hers; she felt quite convinced that the princess knew nothing of the real rank of her lover, but believed him what he appeared—a humble bard. To keep her still in that belief was what she aimed at; and if she could once separate them before an explanation took place, she was determined they should never meet again.

The margravine's intrusion on the privacy of the lovers has been already detailed; and it may be remembered that while the princess remained stupified with shame and terror, Sophia, under pretence of befriending them, hurried the prince away, bidding him await her in her closet, whither she re-

paired, on leaving the margrave with his sister.

The agitated William was pacing the apartment with disordered steps, when the margravine entered; too late, repenting his knight-errantry, and trembling for the issue of an event on which hung all his hopes of happiness. It is true he had only anticipated an union which he might have ratified in a few months hence in the face of the world. But in doing so, he had humbled the woman he adored, and thrown a shade on her fame which might lower her in the opinion of his father, whose ideas of female propriety were exceedingly strict; and who, he made very little doubt, would scorn the alliance of one who could listen, even for a moment, to the vows of a man (to all appearance) so much beneath her. While these unpleasant thoughts were passing through the prince's mind the margravine entered, and hastily approaching, inquired,

with much show of concern, his motives for coming thus disguised to B——.

“Then you know me?” said the prince.

“Assuredly,” replied the margravine.

“But may I ask why your highness did not wait the period fixed for your nuptials? Were you so enamoured with your unseen bride, that you must needs run so many risks to see her? Let me say, that at the best you have acted very imprudently.”

“I know—I feel it,” replied the prince; “but you will make some allowance for me, when you hear that I was prompted to the measure by some slanders, (for I have proved them nothing less,) uttered by a woman who pretended to know the princess intimately.”

Here the margravine bit her lip.

“But who never could have seen that angel, and who certainly knew nothing of her character.”

“Perhaps so,” replied the margravine;

“but your highness revealed yourself to Hermangarde, without doubt?”

“No, I did not,” replied the prince; “but now she must be told everything, though I would carefully guard the secret from all the world beside. I have cogent reasons for still maintaining my incognito. My father would never pardon my romantic folly; nay, he might even prohibit me from publicly ratifying an union with a woman who could stoop to listen to the vows of so mean a lover. I must quit this place instantly for France, where I am at present supposed to be. In a few months I shall be at liberty to claim my beloved bride. In the meantime, gracious lady,” pursued the prince, sinking on his knee before the margravine, “I would interest you in our cause. You have penetrated my disguise, but I trust to your honour and generosity to keep your discovery a profound secret. To only one may you reveal it. My Her-

mangarde must be told the truth: that knowledge is necessary to save her from despair. Comfort her, dearest madam, and tell her that the man she honoured with her heart and hand is not altogether unworthy of those precious gifts."

"Then you do not trust the margrave?" said Sophia, concealing with difficulty her internal satisfaction.

"I had rather not: his highness is at present ignorant of the whole affair, and I would not run the risk of exposing his sister even to his temporary anger; beside, he might deem it right to inform my father, and then——"

"Oh, say no more!—I perfectly understand you. Depart in peace, and rest assured I will act in every way as you could wish. Hermangarde, and she alone, shall share your secret with me. A few months will put a period to all your perplexities; you may then claim your lovely bride, and

this romantic adventure remain buried in oblivion. As you are resolved on concealment, I would advise your instant departure. Herman will visit me anon, and then I must needs explain why you are here, or fall under his anger and suspicion. Adieu, prince!—rely on my friendship. Your Hermangarde shall be consoled for your sudden absence, and taught to look with transport to that hour destined to restore her *minstrel* to her arms.”

This hypocritical and insidious speech effectually imposed upon the prince; favoured by the margravine, he quitted the palace in a very secret manner, and, hastening to the outskirts of the town, procured a change of dress, and ere night closed in, had crossed the Rhine, and was many leagues on his way to the capital of France, where his train had been awaiting him for some time. It has been already said that this unfortunate dupe of a designing woman

never again saw his lovely wife, whose supposed death he had shortly to deplore, nor did he know, till he saw Conradine, that she had left a child, the living image of herself, to console him for her loss. The margrave having succeeded in deceiving him, as well as her husband and the unfortunate Hermangarde, in a short time reaped the fruit of her intrigues; and ere the period that the imprudent but injured princess really ceased to exist, her place was filled by another.

It would be unnecessary and painful to recount the various arguments, nay, threats, used by the King of Hungary, ere he could bring his heart-wounded son to accept the hand of the Princess of A——, or to describe the loathing with which he at length consented to espouse her. Suffice it, the nuptials were solemnized with great pomp, and in two years after that event, the prince mounted his father's throne.



Time, if it failed to eradicate the image of Hermangarde from William's heart, worked favourably for her gentle successor, for though he never loved her as he had loved his matchless Hermangarde, yet he was at length won to respect her gentle, unobtrusive virtues; and though he never ceased to regret his first unfortunate engagement, he continued faithful to his second. He treated the amiable princess with uniform politeness, and to his daughter he proved a too indulgent father. It is almost unnecessary to say, the margravine was highly applauded by her father for her adroitness in separating the lovers, even after a marriage had been effected, and as a proof of his approbation he sent her a magnificent present of jewels, and in addition to her marriage dower, settled on her a small principality, independent of her husband's control. Thus was this base and treacherous woman rewarded for an act that threw

an indelible stain on her character, and finally lost her the esteem and friendship of those bound to her by the ties of consanguinity and love.

The Duke of A——, having achieved this favourite measure, for a time gave his attention to other matters, for his ambitious mind was ever planning and plotting for the aggrandizement of his house; but when, after an union of several years, the Queen of Hungary did not seem destined to give a male heir to the crown, his intriguing brain was once more set at work, and it appeared to him the height of good policy to cement his family interest by the union of his grandchildren. He sounded the margravine on the subject, and, as he anticipated, found her well disposed to enter warmly into his views, but, for particular reasons, was averse to appear forward in the business. He had also an equal repugnance to be the first to propose such a measure; for

he felt sure of neither possessing the esteem nor confidence of his royal son-in-law, who ever appeared particularly jealous of his interference, and averse to adopt any plans of state policy of which he was the mover. While he ruminated and planned, without coming to any determination, he received a communication from his daughter which gave him infinite surprise, but, at the same time, great satisfaction, as it promised him the accomplishment of his ardent wishes, without bringing him more forward in the affair than was consistent with the extreme caution and craft of his character.

About this period, by some fatality, an ancient prophecy, which had long slumbered in that oblivion wherein, for the happiness of those concerned, it had better have still reposed, was revived, and strongly insisted on. Curiosity was awakened, and several men, deep read in occult mysteries, gave it their full sanction. The margravine, know-

ing her father's views and wishes, and her consort's credulity on such subjects, made the most she could of it, and the margrave on several occasions had, as he supposed, supernatural warnings on the subject. Such aids were necessary, for on the unhappy termination of his sister's nuptial treaty with Hungary, he had been heard to say he would never again seek an alliance so distant for any member of his house. To this prophecy, also, the guilty and unfortunate Charles mainly owed his ruin, for it gave a colour to his ambitious views, and, more than even the promises of his insidious colleagues, induced him to aspire to the hand of Beatrix.

Before the margrave sent proposals of a matrimonial nature to Hungary in behalf of his son, he was willing to ascertain, by every means in his power, whether Albert were the individual therein alluded to. In consequence, every astrologer of note was

had in requisition, and their decision was in the prince's favour. Eugenio coincided with his brethren, but made a subjoinder, which none save himself had even hinted. He insisted that the princess must be *the eldest born daughter of her father*. As the King of Hungary had but one daughter, this seemed a superfluous nicety, and Eugenio received little credit for making it. However unwilling William might be to dispose of his daughter's hand while that daughter was still an infant, or however averse he might be to treat of another matrimonial alliance with B——, yet was he not hardy enough to oppose the concurring testimony of so many witnesses. He was strongly tinctured with the prevailing opinions of the age, and therefore resolved, ere he gave his definitive answer on the subject of the contract, to read the stars himself, in conjunction with Alberto, a learned Florentine, then at his court.

After much patient investigation, the fact was ascertained beyond a doubt: the stars of the infant cousins already approximated, and their future happiness and prosperity seemed so interwoven, that to separate their destinies seemed impossible.

William, though convinced, was not satisfied, but he no longer opposed the views of his father-in-law. The children were solemnly contracted, a dispensation from the pope having been obtained; and as they advanced in years, no pains were spared to make them familiar with the idea of their future union. With the princess they seemed to succeed pretty well, for, till she saw Prince Charles, she thought and spoke of Albert as her future lord. Every morning she saluted and addressed some endearing speech to his portrait, which adorned her chamber, and every night she bade a tender adieu to the senseless canvas. With Albert, it was far different. No

sooner did his young mind fully comprehend the extent of the obligation imposed upon him, than a feeling nearly allied to detestation for the princess took possession of every faculty of his soul; he shuddered involuntarily whenever her name was mentioned, as if a presentiment of the future trouble she would cause him had been mysteriously infused into that mind, otherwise so buoyant and so little disposed to harbour gloomy presages. Duty, however, forbade his openly expressing all he felt on the subject, and it is impossible to say how he might have acted had he never seen Conradine, or how far he might have been led to sacrifice his own private feelings to the wishes and prejudices of his father and family. But it is useless to waste time in idle speculation: it is high time that I should lead my readers back to the margrave's cabinet, where I think I left the prince on his knees before a fond and for-

giving father, and the lovely object of all his tenderness reposing on the bosom of her new-found sire. Thus, then, were these individuals grouped, when the door opened, and the unconscious margravine entered the apartment.

A rapid glance from her keen eye enabled her to recognise in a moment every individual of the group before her, thus so wonderfully, so mysteriously associated. A pang as deadly as if a sword had pierced her, darted through her heart; a shriek, long, loud, and piercing, burst from her convulsed lips; she clasped her hands in evident agony, and fell senseless on the floor.

“Wretched woman!” exclaimed the margrave, eyeing his prostrate consort with a blended look of scorn and pity—“wretched, guilty woman! your agitation condemns you. Albert, assist her; though her conduct has been base and cruel, you are her



son. Go—take her hence!—she is hateful to my eyes.”

Greatly amazed, the prince obeyed, wondering to what his sire alluded, for he had never seen him but kind and most affectionate to the margravine, often, indeed, when she little deserved his attention. As yet he was ignorant of the cruel part she had acted toward the parents of his idolized Conradine; he could not even guess how she had provoked the resentment of one so tenderly attached to her, but he feared there must be just cause for his father’s anger, and it was with extreme pain and anxiety he prepared to fulfil his mysterious order. Having consigned his still insensible mother to her female attendants, he hastened back to the cabinet, and with trembling eagerness besought his sire to explain his reason for using such harsh language towards the margravine. The margrave shook his head, and sighed deeply.

"Alas! my son," said he, "I cannot oblige you so promptly as I could wish: as yet I have no actual proof of your mother's criminality; but have patience—a very short time must explain all."

While he yet spoke, a page entered, and informed him that the Baron Romana had just arrived, and humbly prayed to be conducted to the presence of his sovereign. Anxious to hear what the baron had to say in his defence, the margrave immediately granted his prayer, and in the next moment Romana stood before him. Dejection, not guilt, sat on the pale face of this amiable man, and he appeared to await with modest and dignified firmness for those reproaches he felt sure of receiving from his prince, for he was by no means ignorant of the charge preferred against him by de Konisburgh.

How greatly, then, was he surprised when he heard himself addressed with mildness,

and entreated rather than commanded to relate all he knew relative to the mysterious female reared by him and his sister in such extreme seclusion. The baron, thus called upon, saw the necessity of using candour, and in as few words as possible informed the margrave of every particular connected with her birth, and the early death of the princess, her mother. As the baron proceeded with his detail, the heart of Herman was smitten with extreme anguish, and he could not help loudly expressing the sorrow he felt for the sufferings of his still fondly loved and deeply regretted sister. The margravine's conduct appeared in the blackest colours, and he came promptly to the resolution of never beholding her again.

When Romana ended his relation, the margrave embraced him with the utmost cordiality, assuring him that every unfavourable impression respecting him was entirely effaced, and that he felt for him a

warmer esteem than before the late explanation had taken place.

“ To you, Romana, with the kind assistance of Heaven, I owe the preservation of the offspring of my sister—that dear sister, who died, thinking me her bitterest enemy! Oh, cruel Sophia, this was thy work! But no longer will I indulge in vain regret. Alas! my most poignant sorrow cannot recall the past. I have now to apprise you, my dear friend, of a most wonderful discovery—a discovery, that in some measure enables me to endure the severe domestic trial under which I am at this moment labouring. Come with me, and I will present to the father of Conradine the preserver of his child.”

Full of astonishment, Romana followed the margrave into his cabinet, nor was that astonishment by any means lessened when he heard his illustrious conductor announce the style and title of Conradine's parent.

The King of Hungary, fearful of sinking in the baron's esteem, would hardly suffer him to reply to the greetings of Albert and Conradine, so eager was he to explain the circumstances connected with his apparent desertion of Hermangarde; and had the baron before entertained any doubts of his truth and honour, they must now have entirely vanished, so simple and so ingenuous appeared the explanation of the noble stranger. And now, without dwelling longer on the subject, suffice it to say, that every concurring testimony went to prove the identity of Conradine. She was acknowledged publicly by her royal father, and, in prejudice of Beatrix, proclaimed by him heiress of Hungary. The margrave, satisfied on this point, no longer rejected her alliance, but most joyfully accorded his consent to her union with his beloved son.

The feelings of the prince, on this happy termination of all his troubles, were beyond

description felicitous: one sorrow alone found place, where all else was the purest joy and proudest exultation. The margravine's delinquency brought the blush of honest shame into his cheek, and he would willingly have forgotten that he had such a mother. Nature, however, asserted her claims, and pleaded for the fallen and decried Sophia, who, unable to bear the coldness, nay, aversion of her consort, and the contempt of his subjects, requested permission to retire to her own country. Willing to part in friendship from a mother he had once respected, and still, in spite of all her crimes, loved with filial fondness, Albert sought an interview with her highness on the eve of the day fixed for her departure from B——, but his respectful request was peremptorily denied. Sophia could not summon resolution to meet one who knew, and doubtless abhorred, her conduct; she, however, sent the prince her

blessing, and sincere wishes for his happiness, but to see him she declared was impossible. On the following morning, this unhappy but still proud woman quitted B—— ; her wandering steps were attended by few followers, and with a heavy heart she directed her steps to V——. Her father (the chief instigator of her crimes) received her coldly, and very unwillingly granted her an asylum in his dominions. A lonely castle on the banks of the Danube was appointed for her residence, and there, in secret repinings and unbroken solitude, the haughty Sophia wasted her days. One only consolation was hers, the knowledge of her son's affection, of which he frequently assured her. When she had resided about two years in her lonely retreat, she was seized with a dangerous distemper, which brought her to the very brink of the grave; she, however, recovered, and becoming fully sensible of the enormity of her past conduct,

and wishing to make her peace with Heaven, by a signal act of expiation, she obtained permission from her father to found a convent, and selling her principality to him, and also the jewels, the reward of her perfidy, she appropriated the sum she received to that pious purpose. As soon as everything was arranged, she commenced her novitiate, and in due time (having received a dispensation of her nuptial vow from Rome) pronounced those irrevocable vows which separated her from the world and from those connexions whom she had so deeply injured. And now I shall bid her adieu, sincerely hoping her penitence was sincere, and that in the record of human frailty and errors her sins are blotted out.



## PART XI.

“Thy fatal flame  
Is nursed in silence, sorrow, shame :  
A passion, without hope or pleasure,  
In thy soul's darkness buried deep  
It lies, like some ill-gotten treasure.”

I MUST now return to the period when Prince Charles quitted the train, with whom he was proceeding to V——, to escort the margravine to Buda. I have already said, he quitted it on the confines of the dominions of A——, hinting that an affair of the heart and a wish to pay a flying visit to the beloved fair one, induced him to absent himself for a short time. The care-

less manner in which he spoke convinced the listeners of his sincerity. He quitted his companions, and attended, as usual, only by Julio, made the best of his way towards Hungary. In the meantime, the Swabian escort proceeded on the way, wondering exceedingly at the prince's lengthened absence. They loitered as much as possible, in the hope of his return, and were already some leagues from V——, when the courier, bearing the unpleasant news of Albert's second disappearance, overtook them. No longer had they any choice. The leader judged it prudent to push on, and make the best apology in his power for the absence of his chief.

At another time the proud Sophia would have resented the prince's negligence, but her heart was then oppressed with a secret disquiet. She had heard, from undoubted authority, that her royal brother-in-law grew every day more averse to the ratifica-

tion of the nuptial treaty, and only waited for a fair opportunity to break it off entirely. It was also hinted that the princess, his daughter, took every opportunity to strengthen her father's resolution; having been heard to declare she would never marry a man she did not know, and consequently could not love. Anxious to be at B——, to advise with the margrave, and, if possible, prevent the intelligence of Prince Albert's unaccountable conduct reaching the ears of the King of Hungary, the margravine, without casting a thought on Prince Charles and his slighting conduct, returned to her home with a mind deeply oppressed, and a heart ill, very ill, at ease.

Meantime, Prince Charles and Julio, on quitting the Swabian escort, proceeded to the Hungarian capital: but finding that the young princess was at her country seat, they set out immediately for that beautiful

and secluded mansion, preserving the strictest disguise, and took up their abode in a small hamlet near the dwelling of the devoted Beatrix.

The Queen of Hungary, from the birth of her daughter, had never enjoyed good health, and was seldom able to encounter the exuberant vivacity of her giddy child. Much indulged by her father, and flattered by her attendants, the princess formed few wishes that were not immediately gratified. Fond of liberty, and detesting the formal restraint of the court, as often as possible she retired to the *Strena*, the house already mentioned, so called, being the gift of her father on her tenth birthday. It was in the lovely shades of this retired dwelling that she enjoyed unbounded freedom. Neither her governess nor her ladies had the power or the inclination to control her. They kept in mind that she would one day ascend a throne; and they deemed it per-

fectly unnecessary, in consequence, to coerce her, or confine her within those narrow bounds prescribed by custom to females of humbler birth, and less brilliant fortune.

No sooner had her sire departed on his secret journey to B——, than the princess quitted Buda for her beloved Strena. She had not been long there when, in one of her solitary flights, she beheld her insidious lover at her feet. Childish and imprudent, she was charmed at this proof of his regard, which he assured her he gave at the peril of his life. Never was there a man more likely to succeed with a woman than Prince Charles. He *then* loved the princess, and as his passion was returned, it required few persuasions to induce the weak and silly child to accept his vows, and plight her own in return.

“Flee with me, dearest Beatrix!” exclaimed he, pressing her to his heart—“flee with me! The hour approaches that will

free you from the chains which now so cruelly fetter you: till that blessed period, we will conceal ourselves from every eye—we will be all the world to each other. Hesitate not then, dearest!—a safe retreat awaits you. Speak!—shall it be to-night? All is prepared. Oh, delay not to make me happy!”

In an evil hour the wretched Beatrix consented; and at midnight met her guilty lover in the garden. Horses were in waiting—and in that dark and mysterious hour, she fled her home of innocence and love, to become the victim, and at length the scorn, of a man without a conscience or a heart.

To Padua the travellers directed their steps, and in due time arrived there in perfect safety. Gaufridi, the contriver of the whole scheme, conducted the prince and his companion to the house of a confederate, where they were to remain secreted till the expected crisis in the fate of Prince Albert

(which was predicted to be near at hand) should be past. That it would be other than favourable to his wishes, Charles could not for a moment doubt; and as he was taught to believe that secrecy would then be no longer required, he submitted to the present necessity with the best grace he could.

Gaufridi passed much of his time in close conference with his host, leaving the lovers to amuse themselves as they might; and nearly three weeks had thus glided away, when an event, as unexpected as it was unpleasant to the monk, entirely changed the face of affairs, and made a farther residence in Padua unnecessary.

One of the fraternity with whom Gaufridi was leagued had been stationed in B——, to bring the earliest intelligence to him of any great change in the ducal family—for some great change his confederates at the lone tower on the banks of

the Brenta had taught him to expect, which would at once determine the fate of Prince Albert, and decide the future prospect of his ambitious kinsman. It was late in the evening, when a horseman, covered with foam and dust, stopped at the gate of the dwelling which sheltered the fallen Beatrix and her guilty seducer. He claimed an immediate interview with Gaufridi, and no sooner was he ushered into the presence of the monk than he entered briefly on the business of his visit. Few words were necessary to make Gaufridi acquainted with the wonderful changes that had recently taken place at the court of B——; changes which at once decided the pretensions of his pupil, whose sun had set for ever. The crisis in his cousin's fate had passed—blood had been shed, but no life lost; and Albert of B—— was actually about to espouse the true heiress to the crown of Hungary, while his thrice guilty relative grasped a shadow,



whose fate, with that of his own, would soon be sealed for ever.

“ We have been a little mistaken in this business,” said the monk, coldly, to his companion; “ but it cannot be helped now. I must conduct the prince and his fair lady to the Brenta: they are not the first illustrious characters that have entered Barman’s abode, never to quit it again. One consolation is ours: his wealth is all in our coffers, and the princess brought jewels enough with her to endow three principalities. So adieu, for the present. I must visit the prince, and invent some excuse for taking him and his fair lady to Barman’s cave. You must not appear; he must know nothing of the business that brings you hither.”

The stranger pressed his finger emphatically on his lip, in token of silence, and the monk went in quest of his intended victims.

With an embarrassed and anxious coun-

tenance, the wily hypocrite presented himself before those he intended to ensnare to their destruction, and though he spoke not, his discomposure soon attracted their attention. With much alarm, the prince hastily inquired into the cause of his agitation, trembling lest he should hear tidings inimical to his ambitious views, yet unable to repress the curiosity which the monk's manner excited.

“If my hopes be baffled where they rise the highest,” said the prince, mentally, running hastily over in his own mind the long catalogue of his guilty wishes, “then, indeed, I am a miserable wretch—miserable beyond example. But if he come to say our steps are traced, and there is a chance of my losing Beatrix, I shall not break my heart; she is at best but an insipid puppet. But what do I say?—indifferent as I am grown to her, I must not lose her, since she is one step, and that a high one, in the ladder I

am mounting; the summit of which, if I once gain, then—then, I shall be——”

This train of thought was suddenly interrupted by a faint scream from Beatrix, who ran towards him, and threw herself into his arms.

“ Oh, Charles, they are come !” said she. “ Julio has seen them ! We shall be discovered, and either separated or dragged back to Buda ! Speak, speak ! I am dying with apprehension. Can we not quit this city ? Is there no place we can flee to, in which we shall be secure from those cruel men ?”

“ Explain, Julio,” said the prince, turning to the monk—“ the princess’s words. What has alarmed her ? To what men does she allude ?”

“ To some soldiers of the king, her father,” replied the page, hardly able to suppress the smile rising to his lips, at the easy credence given to his false tale. “ I saw them but now pass the door of this

very house; and no doubt, ere long, if any suspicion be entertained that the fair fugitive is concealed in this city, an order will be given to search every house. Night approaches: favoured by its obscurity, I make no doubt of being able to get you safe out of the town. I have mules waiting. Will you go, or stay and run the risk of falling into the hands of the King of Hungary's emissaries?"

"Go, go!" exclaimed Beatrix, clasping her hands in agony. "Make it not a question; I would sooner inhabit a cottage with my Charles than share a throne with any other man!"

A sarcastic smile was all the reply the prince vouchsafed to this impassioned speech: he turned coldly from his young mistress, and bade Julio do what he thought best.

"If we are not safe here," said he, "by all means let us quit it: on you I rely in all cases of emergency. If flight be

determined on, at what hour shall we depart?"

"In another hour it will be dark enough for our purpose," replied the monk. "Prepare for your journey; I shall go and see the mules saddled: when I return, be sure you are ready to attend me."

They both promised, and the monk departed, to apprise his colleague of the success of his mission. In a very short time all was prepared. Mounted on excellent mules, they quitted Buda by by-ways, escaping danger—for the best reason in the world, because none menaced them.

When they had completely cleared the city, Charles ventured to inquire of his page to what place he was directing their steps.

"To the tower on the Brenta," was his laconic reply.

A cold shudder ran through the veins of the guilty prince, at the mention of that infernal den.

"Could you not," said he, "choose some other retreat?"

"Impossible!" returned the monk. "I thought we should have been safe at Padua, but you see we were not; therefore to the tower we must hie. But why do you seem unwilling to go thither? Your reluctance surprises me."

"A secret dread weighs on my spirits," replied the prince, drawing a deep sigh. "I know not why it should be so, but I never think of that tower without feeling an indescribable horror pervade my whole frame."

"You had better be silent on that subject," whispered the monk; "if the princess hear you, she will be alarmed."

Charles, thus checked, tried to reconcile himself to the thought of entering once more that detestable habitation, and encountering its demoniac master. He secretly hoped that nothing would occur to raise suspicion in the mind of Beatrix; for,

however depraved he might be, enough of human feeling still clung to him to make him shrink from appearing in his real colours, even in the eyes of one becoming daily more and more indifferent to him.

During their ride to the tower, each individual of the party pursued undisturbed a silent train of thought. Beatrix rejoiced at having escaped from those she supposed in search of her: Charles, between loathing and unsatisfied ambition, at one time almost wished his fair companion had been discovered; at another, shrank with horror at the bare idea of losing one, by whose means he was to ascend a throne: Gaufridi cogitated on plans black and base as his own heart—plans which it required one as depraved as himself to bring to maturity. At length the travellers arrived at the tower, and the prince, roused by Gaufridi from his painful musings, assisted Beatrix to alight.

The gloomy and desolate appearance of

the tower threw an instant damp on the light spirits of the princess: she hung heavily on the arm of her lover, and, for the first time since her flight from Hungary, repented that ill-advised step. As she advanced through the gloom, her terror grew more lively, and she could not resist observing that Julio had chosen a very dreary abode for them.

“Are we to remain long here?” said she, addressing the page.

Gaufridi was walking almost at her side when she put this question to him: he did not, however, appear to hear her, but a voice close at her ear whispered—“*For ever !*”

“Merciful God!” exclaimed she, starting, and looking round—“what was that? Did you speak, Julio?”

“No, illustrious lady,” replied the mock page; “but why ask you the question? Did you hear aught?”



"I did, indeed," replied the wretched girl; "a voice plainly said, '*For ever!*'—surely it was you that spoke."

"Pardon me, madam," replied he, "I never opened my lips; be assured it was only fancy."

• "Nothing more, dearest," replied the prince, hardly knowing what he said.

"It was not fancy!" cried the trembling Beatrix, throwing herself on the prince's bosom—"I felt the breath of the speaker on my cheek. Oh, take me hence, if you love me! I cannot stay here."

"Calm your agitation," replied he; "indeed, you must be patient. Reflect on the dangers we have just escaped. I could take you to no place half so secure as this. Do not let childish fear usurp its sway over your mind. Am I not with you? and is not Julio also here?"

"Yes, yes," said the page, in a light and jeering tone, "we are both here: what,

therefore, can you dread? Let me assist your highness."

So saying, and without waiting for permission, he caught up the hardly breathing girl in his brawny arms, and throwing part of his garments over her eyes, dashed down a flight of broken steps, followed more leisurely by the heart-sick Charles.

On entering an outer cave, the monk placed his burden on a seat, and bidding the prince watch over her, retired, saying he must speak to Barman alone, ere he introduced his companions.

Beatrice, though not quite insensible, was nearly so: a stupor enchained her faculties, and it was some time before she remarked the sudden change from rapid motion to perfect stillness which had taken place in her situation. Her head reclined on her bosom, and her arms hung listless by her side; the prince, in the meantime, truly rejoiced that his mistress continued in this

quiescent state, as it freed him from her questions and vain importunities. He paced the limits of the cave, eagerly expecting Gaufridi's return, and not a little curious to know what he could have to say to Barman in secret.

At length, after some time had elapsed, his patience totally failed him, and he was resolved to explore the caves, and present himself at all risks before the magician. This resolution was no sooner formed than acted upon; he cast a glance on Beatrix, to see if her stupor still continued, and finding it did, he hesitated no longer, but followed the steps of the perfidious page.

After pursuing the only path that presented itself to his view, the prince at length arrived at the entrance of a spacious cavern, which he soon recognised as the scene of his initiation. This circumstance was not calculated to calm his perturbation, and he was about to turn back in fear and disgust,

when the sound of voices struck on his ear; and hoping to discover Gaufridi, he advanced.

The tones which had thus lured him on evidently proceeded from the marble altar, and he was about to strike sharply against it, when the following words arrested his purpose, and chained every faculty of his mind in horror and unspeakable astonishment.

“I agree with you.” (Gaufridi was the speaker.) “It is, indeed, unlooked for and unwelcome; but we must no longer hesitate: neither of them must ever return to the world. I had better go, and conduct them to the outer cave. When you hear me call you by name, touch the spring, and we are for ever released from their presence and endless reproaches.”

“You shall go; but first repeat that most amazing part of your information again—I cannot understand it,” said a voice, which Charles recognised for Barman’s.

“ The King of Hungary has discovered a daughter born before Beatrix, and has acknowledged her for the heiress of his crown—the particulars of her birth, as yet, I know but imperfectly; however, this is certain, that Albert of B—— saw her, became enamoured of her, and is about to be united to her: so you see, the prophecy is on the eve of being fulfilled, but not in the person of our illustrious pupil. We must submit to fate, console ourselves with the spoil of our dupes, and dismiss their spirits incontinently to the mansions of Pluto.”

“ In your company, then, infernal fiends!” cried the infuriated prince, dashing with one violent blow the altar into a thousand splinters—for it was not composed of marble, as it seemed, but of painted wood. “ Monster!” reiterated the prince, darting first at Gaufridi, then at the sorcerer—“ now for revenge! I have been your slave and dupe too long!”

Stunned by the suddenness of his appearance, both Barman and the monk were for a moment unable to defend themselves. Gaufridi, however, possessing more strength than his colleague, and Charles becoming embarrassed between his two foes, let his quondam page escape, while he attacked Barman with such vigour, that he soon sank beneath his blows. In the contest, the eyes of the enraged prince were attracted by an object he had long coveted, and which he was resolved to possess, though by this time his faith in arts magic was much shaken. This was no less than the ominous volume by which the sorcerer had regulated the course of events, or rather had pretended to do so. With one desperate struggle, Charles tore the clasped volume from Barman's bosom, and brandishing it in the air, exclaimed—

“Perish, villain, by the instrument of your perfidy!” striking, as he spoke, the heavy-bound book with herculean force on

the sorcerer's temple—"perish! and give the speedy lie to your vain boast of immortality!"

The sharp edges of the volume made a deep wound across the old man's forehead; he struggled with his powerful adversary, but in vain: weak and enfeebled, he was no match for the strong and athletic prince, and, after a fruitless effort, he sank, wounded and bleeding, on the earth. In this situation he lay, reviled by his dupe; and amid impotent rage, mental agony, and bodily torture, expired. No sooner had the prince satisfied himself that the sorcerer was indeed no more, than spurning his lifeless body, he exclaimed—

"And thus you give the lie to your own vain boast! Immortal!" said he—"yes, yes, the worm that gnaws here," smiting his breast as he spoke, "tells of immortality, but not of this earth. Guilty dupe of more guilty deceivers, thou shalt live eternally, and live in torture!"

So saying, he rushed forth, and in the next moment stood in the presence of the unfortunate princess. She was sitting where he had left her, but no longer immersed in stupor; her eyes were open, terror was seated on her damp brow, and her white hands were clasped in agony on her heaving breast. On perceiving her lover, she darted towards him.

“Oh, Charles!” cried she, “what have you been doing? From whence arose those cries of agony I heard but now? Blood, too! Alas! I fear all is not right.”

“Question me not!” cried the prince, rudely pushing her back. “Tempt me not to deal with you as I have just done with another impostor! Back, I say!—let me pass!”

This rough speech was attended with as rough action, and the trembling form of the princess fell prostrate on the rugged pavement. Heeding not this circumstance,



Charles rushed past her, and in the next moment was lost to her view. Terror of mind and pain of body prevented the guilty but unfortunate Beatrix from rising: thus she lay panting on her hard bed, when a low noise like that of a stealing footstep met her ear. Making a violent effort, she turned her head towards the spot from whence the sound proceeded, and beheld the cautious approach of the page.

“Julio!” cried she, joyfully—“is that you? Oh, in this hour of dread and distress, ’tis sweet indeed to see the face of a friend! Can you tell me what fiends dwell here, and what evil spirit has possessed the unhappy Charles?”

“I come not to answer idle questions,” replied the monk, in a surly tone. “Time is precious. I saw the exit of your gallant lover, and I must confess he took rather a rude farewell of your highness; but it is of little consequence to one in your situation,

already trembling on the verge of nothingness."

"What mean you?" cried the princess. "Surely you are not influenced by the same wrathful spirit that prompted Prince Charles to degrade his manhood? You do not mean to injure me?"

"I know not what you may term injury," said the monk, still advancing, "nor do I care; words and their several meanings are now of little consequence. You stand, I again repeat it, on the verge of *nothingness*! You have been the cause of too much mischief already, to go unscathed away—you have seen too much, to return to the world; therefore, with your good leave, this little instrument," drawing a dagger from the bosom of his vest, "shall gently open a passage for your departure: it is keen, and the pain will be hardly more than what a tapestry needle has doubtless often inflicted on your fair fingers."

Beatrix heard all, but she was either too terrified or too enfeebled to move. She raised her eyes to the monk's face; its cold and hard expression agreed well with his horrid speech.

"You are serious, then?" said she, with desperate calmness.

"Doubt it not," was the cool reply. "To the manes of my murdered friend I devote thee; and, mean as is the offering, oh, accept it, Barman! and rest assured it is not the only blood that shall be shed for thee!"

So saying, the diabolical monster plunged his weapon into the bosom of the shrinking princess, then drawing it calmly forth, devoted, on its reeking blade, with many bitter curses, Prince Charles and his whole race to perdition. A profusion of blood flowed from the gaping wound, thus leisurely inflicted, but the senses of the sufferer did not fail. She still kept her eyes fixed on the

monk, who, appearing satisfied with what he had done, withdrew to a recess, from whence he dragged several bundles of straw which he unbound, and scattered loosely about. He then opened a door, and took out a small case, from which he poured a quantity of black powder. This done, he retired to the interior cave, and after the absence of a few minutes, returned with a lighted torch, and loaded with a casket, Beatrix knew to contain the jewels she had brought with her from Strena.

During the short period of his absence, the princess had succeeded in raising herself from the floor, and now stood leaning against the rugged side of the cave, holding her robe many times doubled over her wound. The blood had in a great measure stanchd, but a deadly sickness was fast stealing over her frame. The monk scarcely noticed the change in her posture, so busy was he with his own thoughts and occupa-

tions. Though her faculties were fast benumbing, Beatrix, as if intuitively, comprehended the intentions of the base page.

“For those baubles,” thought she, “he has imbrued his hands in blood, and he is now preparing to hide his crime from mortal eye—God forgive him! and may my severe punishment and early death plead with a merciful Creator for that pardon of which I stand in so much need! Oh, my father! my tender mother! little do you know the misery your wretched, guilty Beatrix is exposed to.”

While the princess was indulging in these painful thoughts, the monk was leisurely setting fire to the detached straw, and gently fanning it with his breath into a blaze. No sooner had he succeeded in his purpose, than he cast a furtive glance around, and waving his hand, rushed forth, crying, “Perish! perish! perish!”

The straw at first ignited slowly, being

damp, and much scattered towards the edges of the pile; presently, however, it burnt more briskly, and in a few minutes the heat it produced reached the freezing limbs of Beatrix, and gave a sudden impulse to her morbid faculties. With a desperate effort, she quitted the support of the pillar; how she succeeded in quitting the cave, she could never tell, but she must have quitted it, for towards evening she awoke from a long stupor, and found herself on a low pallet, in a small chamber or cell, attended by a female of a benign aspect, who wore the habit of a nun, and seemed quite familiar with her occupation. The scene of the cave, so terrible to her imagination, was the first that presented itself to her mind. She would have questioned the recluse, but that prudent personage declined all conversation, and gently, though resolutely, enjoined her patient strict silence.

For the first time in her life the self-willed

Beatrix submitted to control. Well watched, and kindly treated, I shall leave her to repose, and account for her present situation, though how she contrived to quit the caves, weak and wounded as she was, must ever remain a mystery.

Some men at work, not far from the ruined tower, were suddenly and dreadfully alarmed at an awful crash which shook the very earth beneath their feet, and in one moment covered them with stones and dust; the smell also was intolerable; and it was many moments before they could recover themselves even to address each other. In the meantime a boy belonging to them, who had been amusing himself with seeking birds' nests in some lofty trees, flew towards them, terror seated on his brow.

"Oh!" exclaimed he, "Pedro, the devil has just left the tower! I saw him depart all in a flame. Don't you smell the brimstone?"

On questioning the boy more closely, they had their fears greatly augmented; and trembling to remain in such a dangerous neighbourhood, they set off in haste to an adjacent monastery to relate their wonderful story to the abbot. Happily the abbot was a man of considerable penetration. He had long suspected that the lonely tower gave shelter to some of those dangerous beings whose deeds shunned the light of day. He, therefore, lost no time in dispatching a few of the most enlightened of the community to ascertain the real state of the case; and in less than two hours they returned, bearing the wounded body of the unfortunate Beatrix, whom they found a few paces from the site of the tower, which no longer cumbered the earth, but lay a scattered heap of shapeless ruins, blackened, and evidently rudely severed by some subtle combustible. Adjoining the monastery was a convent of nuns, and to their care Beatrix



was consigned, while the holy brothers returned to examine, and, if possible, to ascertain how the disaster had originated; but after the closest inspection, they could discover nothing that could at all elucidate the mystery. The wounded female, if she lived, might be able to throw some light on the strange affair; for there could be little doubt that she was, in some way or other, connected with the tower and its mysterious inhabitants.

It was near a week before Beatrix was pronounced out of danger by the monk who attended her, and more than two more before she was able to converse with her attendant. She then expressed a wish to consult a priest, and the abbot in person attended her lowly bed.

Pain and suffering had wrought a happy change in the wayward princess; and it was her firm resolve to reveal everything to the holy man, who patiently waited for her

confession. With much confusion, and many tears, the fallen princess revealed her rank and name; and also, as far as she was able, described the dreadful scene she had witnessed in the cavern.

To paint the abbot's astonishment at her narration would be impossible. In consideration, however, of her sufferings, he forbore to reprove her, but gently hinted the necessity of dispatching a messenger to Buda, to apprise her no doubt sorrowing mother of her safety. Beatrix, though she trembled to meet her parent, could not but acquiesce in the propriety of the measure; and, strange to say, the messenger who conveyed to the royal Matilda the tidings of her child's alarming situation, gave that deceived princess the first intimation of her daughter's absence.

When the flight of Beatrix was ascertained by those who had the care of her person, they were naturally filled with con-

sternation, and trembled to make the affair public, lest they might be punished with an instant dismissal, if not, indeed, immured in prison for their shameful neglect. The king's absence was a favourable circumstance for them; and after consulting together, they agreed to conceal the affair from her majesty, whose secluded style of living enabled them to carry on the deceit with impunity. They had a faint hope that their illustrious charge might return before any discovery took place; and they continued to send messages in her name to Buda, and receive answers, just as if she were actually at the Strena.

When the abbot's messenger, however, arrived, a full explanation took place, and the most foul opprobrium fell on those who had abused the royal mother with such a tissue of cruel falsehoods. Deeply affected, blushing for her child, and taking great blame to herself, the queen prepared to

visit that fallen one. The absence of her consort at this critical juncture added much to her distress; unused to the least exertion of mind or body, she almost sunk under her trials; and when she arrived at the monastery, was in no state to meet her offending daughter, nay, many days elapsed ere she was able to encounter such a trial or to consult with those that attended her on the steps proper to be taken in so novel and afflicting an exigence.

At length, having fortified herself in the best manner she was able, Matilda visited the princess. The meeting was extremely affecting, and Beatrix, truly humbled and contrite, confessed her faults, and with a humility her mother had never witnessed before, entreated pardon: that amiable parent, too gentle to be obdurate, received the penitent to her heart, and very shortly after (having liberally rewarded her pious preservers) set out on her return to Buda,

secretly resolving never to suffer her daughter to enjoy again that unbounded share of liberty which had already proved so injurious to her fame and happiness.

Leaving the queen and princess with their train, slowly travelling towards the capital of Hungary, I shall conduct my readers to B——, just in time to be present at the nuptials of Prince Albert and the Princess Conradine.

Being extremely anxious to return to Hungary, and intending to announce to his queen the interesting changes that had taken place in his family, and the strange discovery he had made, William entreated the margrave not to throw any unnecessary obstacle in the way of their children's speedy union. The margrave had no such intention; yet he secretly determined on consulting Eugenio, and inquiring of the sage at what time the marriage ought to be celebrated. Happily ignorant of what was

passing at his own court, William had no drawback on his felicity, and, in the society of his new-found daughter, forgot the many years of sorrow that had intervened since his separation from her lovely and tenderly beloved mother.

Every preparation which the shortness of the time allowed was made, to give brilliancy to the nuptials of the heir of B——. Romana and Pauline remained at court to witness the joyful event.

It will be as well to notice in this place, that Prince Albert, immediately on being restored to his father's favour, solicited the pardon of Baron Radstadt, and obtained it. Herman was too happy to refuse his son anything. The baron's prison doors were thrown open, and he once more found himself reinstated in his government of the fortress.

Everything wore a smiling aspect at B——; yet in the midst of all this joy,

and the fruition of his fondest wishes, the margrave was miserable. He had, as he intended, consulted Eugenio, and the astrologer's replies to his queries dashed his cup of bliss with gall. The adept, according to the rule he had laid down for his conduct, kept nothing hid from the inquirer, and his own sensibilities being much blunted by age, he scrupled not to reveal all he knew.

"A storm," said he, "lowers over the prince's head, and nothing can be done either to prevent or retard the calamity, which will be more or less afflicting, as an adverse or friendly planet has the ascendancy. When the Raven of the Mountain flaps his wings, the White Hart of Swabia (so Prince Albert was called, from never having engaged in deeds of arms) will receive a sanguine hue. The moon will have filled her horns—midnight will prove the hour of visitation; nor will it be the hand of a stranger that inflicts the blow."

Having uttered this oracular and obscure warning, Eugenio was silent, and no entreaties of the margrave could move him to say more.

“Who is the Raven of the Mountain?” exclaimed the agitated father. “Ulric of Ravensburg bears the raven for his crest—can it be he to whom you allude?”

“There are more than Ulric that wear the raven as their cognizance,” replied Eugenio; “but I will say no more. I have cautioned you: let that suffice.”

The astrologer’s mysterious warning would have been no longer unintelligible to the margrave, had he known that Prince Charles had recently assumed a raven for his crest, in obedience to a hint of Julio’s, who gravely assured his credulous dupe, at the time of his bearing off Beatrix, that the *dove of the east*, meaning the princess, was destined to become the prey of the *raven*; but being ignorant of this circumstance, he



naturally turned his attention to other persons. The unfortunate Ulric, and two of his brothers, after mature deliberation, were fixed upon, either collectively or individually, as objects of suspicion; indeed, the margrave was only surprised that the idea had never entered his mind before: he could no longer look in the faces of his unconscious kinsmen, without reading guilt and treachery in every line. With little ceremony, he ordered them to depart; and in spite of remonstrance upon remonstrance from Prince Albert and the insulted party, the lately expecting guests were obliged to comply with the inhospitable and ungracious mandate of their relative and prince, and quitted B——, breathing nothing but revenge against one who could so grossly violate every feeling of propriety and courtly etiquette. But, alas! had they known what the wretched Herman was momentarily enduring, he would have been

both pitied and pardoned by those whom he had so deeply offended.

During the day, the margrave contrived to keep up his spirits, but no sooner had the shades of night descended on the earth then he became gloomy and abstracted, wandering eternally about his apartments like a perturbed spirit doing penance for some guilty deed performed in the flesh. During those hours usually consecrated to repose, he kept watch over his son. Midnight never beheld him the tenant of his bed, and never surely was the hand that saved him more welcome to the drowning wretch than was the warden's cry to the margrave, proclaiming the first hour of morning. His eyes, his heart, his hands, were then all raised to Heaven in thankfulness. His trembling lips would then utter a fervent prayer of thanks and an earnest supplication for a continuance of that mercy which permitted the object of his

unceasing solicitude to witness the light of a new day.

At length the nuptial morning dawned, and Albert, with proud exultation, led his lovely bride to the altar. The pageantry of the wedding was much dwelt on in the original manuscript, but as such descriptions often prove tedious to the reader, I shall not pause to rehearse them, but proceed with the story.

The nuptial banquet was spread in the great hall of the palace, and a thousand perfumed tapers shed their light and fragrance around. The beaming eyes of the happy and exulting Albert were seldom turned from his lovely bride; her father also gazed on her with rapture, and even the anxious Herman enjoyed a temporary calm. The nobles and knights were all courtesy, the ladies all smiles, and many a young gallant that night ventured to whisper his soft tale without meeting those

frowns his lady love deemed a meet return for his boldness, and a proper indication of her bashfulness, her maiden pride, and scorn. But of all the gay group that surrounded the festive board, none, however they might affect it, felt such true delight as Romana and his amiable sister. They could not help regarding Conradine as their child, and to behold one they so truly loved raised to the situation she was so eminently formed to adorn, completed their measure of earthly felicity—they had nothing more to look or to wish for, except, indeed, that the happiness they then witnessed might continue.

In the meantime, the laugh went round, and ever and anon the minstrels tuned their harps and recited in heroic measure the proud deeds of the heroes of the house of B——, or in softer strains, a love tale or romaunt, in which some allusion or some compliment to the prince and his fair bride

was sure to be introduced. Thus the time passed on golden wings, and joy and gladness reigned around. Little, alas! did those who felt so happy and smiled so brightly think that sorrow was fast treading on the heels of joy; but so it was, and from all this hilarity the brilliant circle gradually and mysteriously sunk into silence. No one, if questioned, could have accounted for this change; yet all felt it. Each guest viewed his neighbour askance; a superstitious nameless dread took possession of every bosom; fear, or a sentiment very nearly allied to it, trembled at every heart; and it was but too evident that the present tone had been given to the company by the margrave, whose deep distress, though unaccountable, could be no longer concealed. Respect for his father's failing had kept Prince Albert silent: he hoped that the margrave would rally his spirits, and shake off the melancholy that had so

unaccountably crept over him; but when he saw his perturbation rather increase than diminish, he could no longer veil his chagrin. Starting, therefore, from his seat, he turned to his royal father-in-law, exclaiming—

“Surely this should not be. Is the brightest, happiest day of my life to close thus sadly?”

William seemed anxious to offer some consolation to the prince, but the words died away ere they met the ear. He turned from Albert to his pale and sinking daughter; sighs burst from his labouring breast, tears rose to his eyes, and, unable to repress the one or hide the other, he turned mournfully away.

“My God!” cried Albert, clasping his hands—“can this be borne?”

The exclamation was instantly echoed by every one present, and in a moment all had started from their seats; Conradine, almost

fainting, hung on her lover's arm, who bent with tender anxiety over her drooping form, whispering that consolation he felt not himself.

While all this was passing, the margrave stood beneath his canopy of state, with a countenance almost livid. One hand was pressed tightly on his breast, while with the other he pointed towards the great window at the extremity of the hall, through which the moon could be seen wandering silently through the heavens.

"*This is the hour!*" cried he, "I know it! I feel it! Yonder planet assures me that the dreadful hour is at hand. Hist! *the mountain raven flaps his wings!* Blood! blood! there is blood!"

All shuddered—all started; for while these hurried and prophetic words were still sounding in their ears, a loud noise was heard in the gallery leading to the hall, and in a moment a wild-looking, maniac-like figure rushed in.

Brandishing a naked dagger in his up-raised hand, the intruder made directly for the spot where Albert stood. In vain did the attendants attempt to impede his progress: with great address he eluded them all, rushing like a thunderbolt through their opposing files. No sooner had he gained the point at which he aimed, than he paused, and in a hoarse voice and hurried manner thus addressed Prince Albert—

“Thou, thou, hast been my bane, my curse, my detestation! To thee I owe my ruin! In vain I leagued myself with fiends to destroy thee—thou bearest a life no hellish charm can reach, but thou shalt live to suffer; and through this channel I will wound thy soul. I can never be happy myself, neither shalt thou be so!”

So saying, he plunged his steel into the innocent bosom of Conradine, (who, on his first appearance, had thrown herself into Albert's arms for protection,) and, reeking



from her breast, into his own guilty heart! A slight but frightful convulsion passed over his haggard features; he uttered a deadly malediction against some unknown person, and then fell motionless on the floor.

The foregoing scene had passed more rapidly than pen can write or tongue relate it, and it was only in the awful moment when the murderer fell dead at their feet that the awestruck assembly, with inexpressible consternation, recognised the murderer and suicide. The margrave also knew the unhappy wretch, and raising his hands and eyes to Heaven, uttered the name of "Charles!"

Prince Charles was indeed the maniac, whose rash and guilty hand had wrought such foul treason on the unoffending Conradine, and whose impious hand had dismissed his own soul to its last awful account with a heavy load of unrepented guilt pressing on it.

In the meantime, the wounded princess lay motionless in her lover's arms. Her eyes were every moment losing their animation; still, however, they were bent on the face of Albert with the tenderest expression, and it needed not the aid of words to convey to his heart the sentiments of her he seemed about to lose for ever. Every one supposed the princess dying, and it was many minutes before any one became collected enough to suggest the propriety of removing the beautiful sufferer to her chamber. The first that felt the necessity of such a measure was her wretched father. He spoke to the no less distressed Romana, who, together with Pauline, drew round the prince, who still supported his bleeding burden. Oh, it was a dismal sight to see the young and gallant bridegroom in his princely array, standing like a living man turned to stone, supporting, though unconsciously, his dying bride, white as the

unsunned snows on Lapland's shore, and over whose costly robe was fast flowing the tide of life!

The awful suddenness of the calamity seemed to have deprived the wretched Albert of all reflection; he continued to gaze on the pale features of her he loved so fondly, with a fixedness, a vacuity, truly appalling. Hoping to arouse him from this frightful and most unnatural apathy, they made an attempt to remove Conradine from his arms. This had the desired effect: he drew back, pressed her closer to his heart, and then burst into tears. This timely effusion perhaps saved him from frenzy; at any rate it completely restored him to recollection, and by degrees he appeared to comprehend the extent of his misery. He bent over the rigid, death-like features of his bride—a shuddering sickness crept through his heart. Her half-closed eyes were rayless; no longer did

their soft expression fill his heart with a thousand nameless transports—no longer did they convey to his sinking soul a promise of that felicity so cruelly blighted in the bud. Oh, it was dreadful—dreadful! more than his manhood could support. The slowly circulating blood gradually congealed in his veins, and with a deep groan he sank back into the arms of the bystanders, devoid of sense and motion.

In this situation the unfortunate and highly interesting couple were separated, and borne to their respective chambers, while the leeches were summoned, and everything was done for the sufferers which their art and experience suggested.

In the meantime, the guests made a hasty retreat from the palace. The body of the wretched Charles had been borne from the scene of his desperate atrocity, and the margrave, hardly knowing what he did, instead of following his son to his

chamber, repaired with a hasty and disordered step to the apartment of Eugenio. With a trembling hand he opened the door of the turret chamber in which the astrologer slept, but the eager glance he darted around met not the object of its anxious search, for the apartment was immersed in gloom. Disappointed, sick at heart, weary of existence, Herman cast himself, despairing, on a seat. He raised his eyes to Heaven—he would have prayed, but the tumult, the agony of his soul, forbade his doing so.

“Florenzo!” cried he, at length, starting up, “where art thou?”

A low, indistinct murmur, but whether of a human voice, or merely the echo of his own words, the margrave could not tell, seemed to sigh around him in sad and mournful cadence. He turned his inquiring eyes on every side, to discover if the sound indeed proceeded from any one, or was only

the creation of his own excited imagination; but again, the obscurity prevented his ascertaining if the chamber were inhabited; still he thought he could discern through the gloom, shadowy and ill-defined forms, and more than once he stretched forth his hand to grasp—thin air. His feelings at length became insupportable, and unable to control his agitation and alarm, he was about to rush from the chamber, when a radiant moonbeam pouring a flood of light through a narrow window, disclosed the person of Eugenio seated at a table, buried, at it appeared, in a deep reverie. A large volume lay open before him, and his fingers still held the style with which he usually wrote. The margrave approached; the astrologer, however, did not appear to notice him.

“Eugenio,” repeated the margrave, as he bent over the old man’s shoulder, “why do you not answer me?”

Still he moved not—spoke not. Herman was now so near that he could plainly distinguish the contents of the book; the characters were large and singularly plain, and hardly knowing what he did, he read aloud the following words:—

“The awful crisis, so long anticipated, is past—the blood of the innocent and of the guilty have flowed together. *The White Hart* of Swabia has received a sanguine dye, and the *Black Raven of the Mountains* lays low! Absent, I have seen all! On the confines of eternity, my eyes are opened. Thou, Herman, wilt be the first to read this: for thee have I penned it. As thou valuest thy soul’s health, pry not again into futurity, nor use any means to come at the knowledge of events still hid in the womb of time. The wisdom of man is foolishness in the sight of God; and, however thou mayst be forewarned, thou canst not always be forearmed. More I would

say, but my hour approaches. Adieu, my benefactor! When thou hast read thus far, look at me: the eye will have lost its speculation—the hand now engaged in thy service will be cold—the tongue, that restless member, for ever silent.”

The margrave here ceased to read—he started. The horrid truth flashed suddenly on his mind! He looked steadily in the face of the astrologer; his features were calm and passionless, his eyes half closed, his lips compressed. Involuntarily the hand of Herman rested on that of the astrologer.

“God of Heaven! he is dead—cold—still—pulseless!” exclaimed he, staggering back as he spoke—“and thus is the measure of my woes complete!”

Then hastily signing the cross on his burning brow, he rushed like a maniac from the chamber of death.

During a long and melancholy fortnight,



the court of B—— suffered all the horrors of suspense. Neither Albert nor his lovely bride was expected to live; the wound of the latter, and the fever and delirium of the former, seemed rapidly conducting them to the grave. The margrave suffered hardly less than his son. His mind, so long the prey of apprehension, sunk under this new and dreadful trial. Indeed it would have been surprising if one of his temperament could have stemmed the mighty tide of adversity, whose giant waves seemed about to overwhelm him. Alas! his heart was torn with anguish; and in the bitterness of his sufferings, he called on death to end his trials and his life together.

In the meantime, the remains of the astrologer were consigned, with much respect, to their last resting-place: not so those of the wretched, guilty Charles. In the still of night his obsequies were performed; Romana alone witnessed the melan-

choly and unblessed ceremony. By his command the earth was levelled over the grave, that no trace might remain of one who had madly forfeited every claim to respect, and whose many crimes exposed his memory to the execrations of every virtuous and honourable mind. Unhappy man ! well would it have been for thee hadst thou never seen the light of day !

When the body of this lost and guilty wretch was being prepared for interment, Barman's book, together with various papers referring to some of the most mysterious events of his life, fell into the hands of the attendants. Unwilling to intrude them on the margrave at a time of such distress, they were given to Romana, who scrupled not to peruse them. From them he learned the full extent of the unhappy man's crimes. The magician's book afforded him little information, being much torn and defaced ; besides, the characters were quaint, and

page after page contained little other than ciphers interspersed with hieroglyphics. The few words, however, that he could make out, plainly showed that guilt-stained as the wretched Charles was, he had been the victim of the grossest deception; and he could not help pitying, while he deeply condemned, one whose morn of life had promised far better things, and who might have been, under proper discipline, an ornament rather than a scourge and a disgrace to his family. In a blank leaf of the accursed volume were traced the following hasty and scarcely legible lines, written evidently under great excitement of mind.

“ I despise, I hate, I execrate myself!— Miserable fool, dupe, and madman—how art thou fallen! How have all thy air-built schemes crumbled into dust! But I can be revenged—deeply revenged! *He* shall live—my enemy shall live; but life shall be a curse to him! I *will* die!—yes, I *can*

die! The elixir has no power to prevent my purpose; it was all a fable—a fiction—but what is not! *He* shall live—I have said it!—but his lovely bride—his royal bride—shall die! My hand is resolute—my heart is stern! I can inflict death, and witness despair—can feed on his torment without shrinking! And then, then I can die! Yes, fiends! all your juggling was ineffectual! But I must away! This moon shall witness the deed!”

From the above incoherent and wildly written lines, Romana could perceive that the prince had meditated his crime long before he committed it. He also discovered, from the other documents, the degraded situation of the unhappy Beatrix, though he could not resolve, in that hour of deep affliction, to add to a father's sorrow by such a heart-wounding disclosure: he was determined, on the first favourable opportunity, to lay the whole matter before his prince,

that steps might be taken to punish some of those wretches whose vile arts had ministered to the evil passions and inordinate ambition of the guilty Charles. Romana's mind, however, was too deeply occupied with the melancholy situation of Albert and Conradine to allow of his thinking long on any other subject; therefore, some time elapsed ere the guilty Marbas, the only one of the base trio, whose actual residence could be traced, was secured: and being detected in the very midst of his deluding mysteries, suffered the penalty of his crimes.

In sullen silence the miscreant endured his sufferings. No threats could induce him to speak; no tortures force from him the name or retreat of any of his confederates. He died as he had lived, unrepentant, but true to the wretches with whom he was leagued. I shall now turn from this subject, happy to quit it for ever, and once more revisit the chambers of pain, where

the young, the noble, and the lovely, were fading like the visions of a dream from the eye of man.

The whole skill of the country was exerted in the cause of the prince and princess, but, unhappily, without effect; their illness hourly increased, and their danger at length became imminent.

To paint the agony of the two fathers would be impossible, nor can words do justice to the anguish of Romana and his sister. The peculiarity of their situation, with respect to Conradine, and the truly parental tenderness they felt for her, gave them a title to the respect and commiseration of every feeling mind. They were universally pitied, almost as much, indeed, as the royal mourner and his brother in affliction; and whenever their despair was dwelt on, so surely was that of the baron and baroness subjoined.

## PART XII.

“ Oh ! Death is deadly wherever he be,  
On lonely wild—or the pathless sea—  
But deadlier, wilder, in field or hall,  
When youth and strength before him fall.

“ To clasp a hand, while your tongue can say—  
A moment—and mine will be but clay ;  
To gaze on the eye that is best and dearest,  
And know, that night to your own is nearest.”

FOR six nights the weary eyelids of Conradine had remained unclosed, nor could the physician's art procure for her the blessing of sleep. It became obvious to all that the uncomplaining patient could not support the unnatural deprivation much longer. Her strength was failing fast, and if no

immediate change took place, a very few hours must decide her fate.

Perfectly sensible of her situation, and resigned to the will of Heaven, she asked but one favour.

“ Let me behold the face of Albert,” said she, “ and I shall die content.”

Pauline gently remonstrated; she assured the princess that no comfort could accrue to her from the indulgence of her wish.

“ I will hide nothing from you, dearest child of my love,” said the baroness; “ the prince is in as great extremity as yourself; but with this difference, that his mind wanders. The violence of his fever has unsettled his brain.”

“ Heaven be praised, even for such heart-breaking intelligence!” exclaimed Conradine. “ I can indulge my last wish, then, without injuring him. Oh, delay not the visit! I feel I am going fast—fast; but I



shall die happy in the presence of my Albert!"

It would have been cruel as well as useless to have resisted any longer the prayer of the sufferer. She was borne gently on a couch into the chamber of her lover, and signing to those that carried her, it was placed at the side of the prince's bed.

A quiet interval was happily granted to the unfortunate young man. He lay in a sort of stupor; his eyes were closed, and he appeared to hear nothing that passed in the chamber.

Conradine uttered a silent prayer for support and consolation under this new but self-inflicted trial; and turning to her attendants, smiled languidly.

"My mother," said she, addressing Pauline, "place the prince's hand in mine: he seems to sleep, and I shall not disturb him. Oh, Albert! we shall soon be separated! How short is the time since the lowest

whisper of my voice would have thrilled to your heart, and filled it with rapture; but now, alas! its loudest tones cannot awaken one feeling of remembrance! I speak, and you heed me not. Adieu! adieu! O that your eyes could rest on me once more! But what do I ask? Alas! I know not! Albert, farewell! We travel the same road: we shall soon meet on the shores of a blessed eternity! Farewell!—farewell!”

Extremely exhausted by her exertions and the excitement of the moment, Conradine could say no more, but sunk languidly on her pillow. She would not, however, resign the prince's hand, which lay pressed to her heart, nor could she withdraw her eyes from his beloved face: thus she continued, till by degrees an insensible slumber stole over her; her eyes gradually closed, and in less than half an hour she was buried in a profound repose.

The tidings of this blessed event were

quickly borne to her mourning parent, and a faint dawning of hope irradiated his benighted soul.

During the long and serene sleep which Conradine enjoyed she was carried back to her own chamber, lest any sudden burst from Prince Albert might awake her, and thereby defeat the dawning hopes of her physicians.

Albert, in the meantime, continued unusually tranquil, more so, indeed, than for many preceding days. It was evident that he did not sleep, but it was impossible to say whether the symptom was favourable or otherwise. Indeed, the majority of his attendants augured ill from it, supposing such a sudden state of quietude proceeded from complete exhaustion, and that he might continue in that situation till nature yielded to the stroke of fate.

Hour succeeded hour, yet no visible change took place. At length the prince

moved; he passed one hand hastily across his forehead, and opening his eyes, fixed them full upon the anxious face of Romana.

“Still an unwearied attendant on my bed of pain! Oh, my esteemed friend! how shall I ever repay you for all you suffer on my account?”

Since his illness the prince had not uttered so many words coherently, and the baron could hardly restrain his transport: he uttered a silent prayer of thanks where it was most due, and bending over the prince, said—

“I ask no reward but your restoration to health: be composed, and the only wish of my heart may be granted.”

“I am composed,” replied Albert; “nay, for hours have I enjoyed the blessing of restored reason. Just as the benignant deity resumed her seat, I was visited by the sweetest vision that ever came to speak

peace to a tortured mind, and yet methinks it was no vision—it was Conradine herself. I heard her speak—I felt the tender pressure of her soft hand, but could make no return; a whispering angel forbade my addressing her. I knew my dearest treasure was near me, I heard her pathetic farewell—it was no dream. Answer me truly, Romana. Was she not here? Does she not still live? Is not that frightful wound closed?—and shall I not once more press her in health and happiness to my heart?”

“God grant it, my son!” replied the baron. “Your beloved is at this moment buried in a profound and needful slumber; her wound is healing fast, and with the assistance of Heaven, I trust the time is near when you may meet to part in this world no more.”

“Oh, Romana, minister of consolation,

receive my thanks! Feeble are words to convey the sentiments of my heart."

"If you had the eloquence of a Cicero I would not listen to you now," replied the baron. "Quiet is needful to ensure your restoration to health, and I must take my old privilege, and insist on your keeping silence."

"The blest assurance you have just given me is life, is health, is everything!" cried Albert; "but, nevertheless, you shall be obeyed. Conradine lives: I will therefore try to live; but if she dies, then I will die! We cannot—must not—be separated."

From that hour both the prince and princess rapidly recovered, and the gloom their illness and extreme danger had spread over the court vanished as they approached convalescence. The first use Albert made of his restored health was to reward all those who had in any way served him,

during the period of his disguise; and as he deemed it an act of justice thus to redeem his pledge to his humble friends, he felt it no less an act of duty to punish the proud and contumacious de Konisburgh. Sanctioned by the margrave, who no longer opposed his taking an active part in public affairs, he summoned Cosmas to appear and answer for the villanous part he had acted towards Conradine. That bold noble, relying on the strength of his castle, treated the summons with open contempt. But the prince was not to be deterred from a just revenge. In spite of the tender remonstrances and even tears of his beloved bride, he led a chosen troop against the arch rebel, who had recovered from the effects of his late discomfit, and was actually meditating an atrocious act—no less than the carrying off the wife of his prince! When that prince in person appeared in martial array before his gates, Cosmas affected scorn, and

answered Albert's defiance with unknightly contempt. But the boaster was soon put to shame; and the tyrant, who had long oppressed his groaning vassals, in the hour of danger found not one willing to stand by him! Deaf alike to threats and entreaties, the soldiers of de Konisburgh, to a man, proved faithless; his gates were thrown open to his justly enraged prince, but the tyrant was no longer there to meet his indignation or answer for his crimes.

When he saw that he was even deserted by those whom he had sought to attach to his person by promises and largesses, he broke out into a paroxysm of passionate invective, and, rushing to his private chamber, sought safety in flight. A secret passage, known only to himself, aided his escape, and while the prince, conducted by the count's page, was diligently searching the apartment for its recreant lord, that guilty man was threading the secret pas-



sages of his fortress, from whence he issued when night threw her veil over creation, and well knowing all the passes in the neighbourhood, made good his retreat, notwithstanding the vigilance of the numerous parties sent out in pursuit of him. Albert, in the meantime, took possession of the castle. De Konisburgh was put to the ban, and declared a traitor to God and his prince, while our hero, little pleased that the tyrant had escaped his vengeance, returned to B——.

The count's future history may be briefly told. He joined a band of fierce brigands in the Upper Alps, with whom, previous to his flight from his castle, he had been frequently associated. His atrocious nature well fitted him to figure among such companions; his career was short, but sanguinary. In heading a party, sent to intercept some rich merchants, he was desperately wounded, taken prisoner, and carried to

Gap, where he was publicly tried and executed. A person who had known the count formerly, saw and recognised him on the scaffold: his story, his crimes, and his punishment became public, but not one sigh, not one tear, was given to his memory. He died, as he had lived, hated and despised by all.

When the King of Hungary beheld the complete restoration of his children to health and happiness, he proposed to the margrave that the remains of the deeply lamented Hermangarde should be removed from their unblessed resting-place. Herman, highly pleased at the suggestion, ordered immediate preparations to be made, and a suitable retinue, headed by himself, William of Hungary, Albert, and Romano, set out for Schwartzwald. The mouldering remains of the unfortunate princess were taken from the cave and placed in a costly urn, which, with due ceremony, was ultimately

deposited in the cemetery of her ancestors; while the crumbling dust of the faithful Ulrica was buried near, and a small brass plate placed over the spot, recording the devoted attachment of this humble friend to those she served so long, so cheerfully, and so well. This mournful duty over, William, after taking a tender farewell of his daughter, the prince, and the margrave, departed for Buda. Still ignorant of all that had occurred there during his long and mysterious absence, Romana, though wishing to impart what he knew respecting Beatrix to her royal father, could by no means persuade himself to do so. Seeing how much his majesty had suffered on Conradine's account, he was willing to hope, that ere he arrived at his capital he would be better able to endure any new trials that might await him than he evidently was at the period of commencing his journey.


The return of the King of Hungary to his capital was hailed with universal demonstrations of joy. After showing himself to his people, and thanking them for their loyalty and affection, he retired into the bosom of his family, to impart to them the principal events that had taken place, and the wonderful results of his journey, (so secretly taken) to B——. Contrary to his expectations, his queen expressed only joy at the recital.

“May your new-found daughter prove more worthy of your love and that of your people than the erring Beatrix!” cried she, with fervour; then leading his majesty aside, she confided to him, with sighs and tears, the lapse their most unhappy child had made from the paths of rectitude.

Astonished—heartstruck, the deeply afflicted father was for some time inconsolable; but at length yielded to the entreaties of his amiable and no longer self-

indulgent consort, and as much as possible sought, at her urgent solicitation, to banish vain regret. It required time, however, before he could consent to behold the young offender. At length, even this point was gained by the persuasive Matilda. He saw and pardoned the humbled and unhappy Beatrix.

Lowered in her own eyes, the imprudent princess heard with infinite pleasure that she had a sister whose priority of birth superseded her own no longer legitimate claim to the crown of Hungary; and confirmed by this circumstance in a hitherto half-formed project of retiring from the world, she made her royal parents acquainted with her wish, and it required little persuasion on her part to induce them to accede to it. Such a step would instantly silence the tongue of slander, and be the best means of making her peace with offended Heaven. Without loss of time, therefore, the youthful



devotee bade a final adieu to the world, and the ceremony of her profession was just about to be solemnized, when, blooming in recovered health and beauty, Conradine, her happy exulting husband, and her revered friends, the Baron Romana and his sister, arrived at Buda.

Queen Matilda received the young and interesting princess, her royal consort's new-found daughter, with every demonstration of respect and affection; losing no opportunity of evincing her regard for her and Prince Albert, much to the admiration of the king, who now began seriously to study his consort's character, and found each day some new beauty in it hitherto either wholly overlooked or disregarded.

It was only in private that this virtuous princess wept over the past, and bitterly reproached herself for allowing the unfortunate Beatrix so much liberty and so much injudicious indulgence.

"Oh!" sighed she, "if I had exerted myself, and done my duty, my degraded child might now have been as lovely in mind as her peerless sister."

Time, however, soothed these bitter self-upbraidings, and the Merciful Power, who read the contrition of her heart, had a reward in store for her, infinitely greater than she could have dared to hope for. In the third year of her daughter's retirement from the world, she became the mother of a fair son, who lived to fill his father's throne, when that father, full of years, and honoured by all who knew him, sank into the silent tomb, respected, regretted, and wept for, by his family and his people.

The birth of a prince, far from proving a vexation and disappointment to Albert and Conradine, gave them infinite pleasure. The prince, in particular, exulted in the event.

"Now," said he, pressing his wife to his

heart, "my beloved Conradine, you are all our own—you belong wholly to Swabia. No longer drawn by duty from this brave people, you will reign in their hearts, and assist me in the delightful task of making them happy."

THE END.











